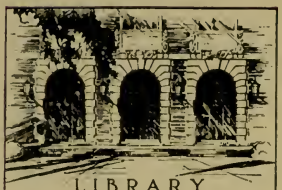
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MRS. CLEVELAND,

AND

THE ST. CLAIRS.

VOL. III.

LONDON :
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MRS. CLEVELAND,

AND

THE ST. CLAIRS,

&c.

One of the amusements of idleness is reading without the fatigue of close attention, and the world, therefore, swarms with writers whose wish is not to be studied but to be read."

DR. JOHNSON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
SUCCESSOR TO HENRY COLBURN.

1836.

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THE ST. CLAIRS.

(CONTINUED.)

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THE ST. CLAIRS.

CHAPTER XX.

Lady Almeria was neither irreligious nor unprincipled; to Vice, therefore, she could not belong — but Virtue, alas! would have been very loath to own her for her child. She was not altogether deficient in understanding;—but still she was obstinate, self-willed, vain, and envious, — all Folly's attributes. Her temper was a gnawing worm which worked at her heart's core, turning her complexion to a dingy yellow, her lips to a dull purple, and giving to her eyes a sharp, fiendish expression, most particularly observable when, by restraining her words, she vainly hoped

to veil all that temper's deformities; deformities of which she was not more ignorant than any one else. Of one thing she was still more aware—she knew she was not popular: of course the fault was in the world, not in her; and, in revenge for their bad taste, she despised those who disliked her. Even if she condescended to marry, it would be for no motive in which feeling was concerned: it would be for a home, a name, and to astonish Lady Fontenoy, who, Lady Almeria had penetration enough to discover, considered her as a thorough old maid!

Such was Lady Almeria when she became first acquainted with Arthur St. Clair; an acquaintance, however, that softened in a very short time the asperities of her nature, and, to her own utter surprise, she found that he pleased her for himself alone, that his opinions and tastes were gradually becoming hers, and that many of her old prejudices and errors, if not removed, were about to take flight. There was a softness in his manners to all, a gentleness in his expressions, a high-toned principle in everything he said, and so much information without pretension, joined to a simplicity of deportment so gen-

tleman-like and rare, that Lady Almeria, who had only laid siege to his heart as the owner of Melcombe and one of the race of St. Clairs, found herself, before she was aware, quite forgetful of these worldly advantages, and only regarding him for his intrinsic merit—to such a degree, in fact, that, for once, she became humble, and as she reflected on his many virtues, she would tremble at her own inferiority.

Still she was so vain, that it never entered into her contemplation, that her person might be equally defective with her disposition;—that faded and aged in appearance beyond her years, she was no object of love, particularly to a man considerably younger than herself. He must admire her, was certain, thought the deceived Lady Almeria; for even when seated by Lady Fontenoy at dinner, and thus separated by distance and form, had he not nevertheless invariably asked her to drink wine? — and was that not proving to a certainty how much she occupied his thoughts? Besides which, in return for the trifling gifts that she had made to Pamela, did he not present her with a very pretty cameo bracelet?

— and that was a convincing proof of love, for, in her case, no admirer had ever advanced half so far.

Her delusion was likewise kept up, in some measure, by Arthur St. Clair's guarded manner towards Lady Fontenoy. She certainly knew they took long rides and long walks together, and that their mutual interest in little Pamela gave him ingress to the nursery, where they constantly met; still, except in the first visit Arthur paid at Clinton Court, Lady Almeria had never heard him utter one word in admiration of Lady Fontenoy. They sat by each other at dinner often without speaking, and in the evening he as often read as talked to any one; nor was it always to Lady Fontenoy that he then addressed himself. From her allurements, Lady Almeria consequently felt herself now tolerably secure; and would say, if at any time her confidence in that respect was shaken, — a circumstance that occasionally happened,— "She is too frivolous for him; and he is not her sort of man — his brother Edward would have suited her better. I wonder she did not attempt a flirtation in that quarter; for Clara is just the

woman to delight in worrying such a little simpleton as Ellen. But Arthur—Arthur St. Clair, indeed! she has not half sufficient understanding to appreciate his talents, mind, or conversation. Then, again, she does nothing to encourage his stay here; but that of course is out of ill-nature towards me. However, I have done my best to prevent his return yet awhile to Melcombe; for I have given Fontenoy a hint that I have *particular* reasons for wishing him to be civil and press his remaining here."

Lady Almeria was one day thus indulging these and similar reflections during her walk, when she was disturbed by the sound of horses' feet, and looking up, beheld the pair in question cantering along, with a groom clattering in the rear. They were neither of them speaking, and passing close by without perceiving her, were soon lost in the distance.

"All is safe, certainly, in that quarter," continued Lady Almeria to herself; "there can be no flirtation between that pair, — no one can make love in a gallop. Poor foolish woman! riding with a man who perhaps has not his superior

on earth in mental ornaments, she only thinks of the pace of her horse! Pitiable being indeed!"

That Mr. St. Clair had remained two months at Clinton Court could not escape the observation of the neighbours; and perhaps they might have observed also upon his long rides with the lady of the mansion, (not always in full gallop,) had not Lord Fontenoy very kindly volunteered the information that Lady Almeria was Mr. St. Clair's object of attraction. The neighbours,—who of course, like all neighbours, always interfered in what concerned them not,—professed themselves satisfied; and, though they must wonder at the owner of Melcombe's taste, it was his affair, and not theirs.

Instructed by his sister, Lord Fontenoy was firmly persuaded that Arthur St. Clair was her admirer. From his early infancy, he had ever regarded her with greater awe than affection; and if the opinion of any one could guide him, it was hers. She had hinted with maiden modesty that Arthur admired her: of course her brother implicitly credited the supposition, and waited in

tranquil expectation for the anticipated proposal. Two months wore away, a third had begun, and — still no proposal came. Lord Fontenoy was astonished, and resolved to take the first opportunity of questioning his wife upon the subject. The opportunity was some time in coming: first of all, a new gun filled his lordship's serious moments; — then a new horse, then a sick one; — then a bailiff turned rogue, and a keeper turned poacher. With such important cares on his mind, no wonder that Lady Almeria's affairs stood over till the present were disposed of; and, awaiting that period, another month wore away.

And what was Lady Fontenoy's occupation during those months? — Why, considering all things, Lady Fontenoy had been a very happy woman. In Arthur St. Clair she had a companion whose society was particularly agreeable to her; she liked him for his worth as well as for his companionable qualities: she was happy in her own darling boy and her adopted child, and in the kindness she was enabled to show towards all within her sphere — her husband and sister ex-

cepted; — to the last it was hopeless, and to the first useless, as kindness in the form of affection was of no value to Lord Fontenoy, although he was supposed not to be unmindful of more substantial proofs of attention. As to Lady Almeria, kindness to her from Lady Fontenoy was, indeed, as pearls before swine. These two were, therefore, as little in Clara's thoughts as she could contrive to drive them thence.

Whilst Lady Almeria built visions of future bliss, and Lady Fontenoy enjoyed her present tranquil existence; did Arthur St. Clair participate in the visions of Lady Almeria, or the tranquillity of Lady Fontenoy? Alas! no: so far from partaking Lady Almeria's tender feelings, he did not even penetrate them; and rarely, indeed, did a thought of her cross his mind at all. He did not absolutely dislike her, and when thrown in her way, could sufficiently accommodate himself to her humour as to extract occasional amusement or instruction from her discourse; but she was the last person in the world whom he would ever think of seeking, and, beyond the common forms of society, the last he would

ever pay attention to. That his manner should be such as to make simple courtesy appear of more than its real value in the eyes of one so little versed in attention from the other sex as Lady Almeria, was hardly to be deemed a fault, though to her ladyship it proved a misfortune. In his heart reigned a very different person: Lady Fontenoy alone occupied his mind; even at times, as he would blush to own, to the exclusion of his brother Edward. His dangers were for days forgotten,—Lady Fontenoy's hard fate, in being doomed to the eternal society of her lord, never for an hour unthought of. In his solitary wanderings he would often lament over his own folly; but his lamentations never produced any resolve to combat his passion, or very possibly, unhappy as it made him, did they give him a genuine desire for cure.

As Lady Almeria secretly acknowledged in the workings of her darling dreams, living for months beneath the same roof as a beloved object is not the precise cure for a wounded heart! But, alas! poor lady, the wound was not from her, though her reasoning held good as regarded another.

Guilty as she deemed herself,—anxious as she was to take upon herself the odium of his sighs, absence of mind, and dejected air,—still to her innocence, in all but intention, Arthur could have sworn before any tribunal; and even of the intent to do harm he was probably ignorant, and every one else but her ladyship, and perhaps Mrs. Miller.

Whether or not Lady Fontenoy suspected Arthur St. Clair's passion, it would be difficult to say. Women are generally pretty clearsighted in that respect when it suits their convenience; but it was not convenient for Lady Fontenoy to observe his love: she neither wished to quarrel with Arthur nor to encourage him: it would be extremely inconvenient for her to lose his society, for his niece to forfeit the watchful care of an uncle, and for Lady Almeria to be deprived of the presence of the only being on whom she never frowned, but often smiled. Lord Fontenoy also wanted his company, when he finished his bottle of claret: Arthur was an invaluable companion at that time, which occasionally made his lordship loquacious, and sometimes disputatious;—he was

invariably silent. The securing so judicious a listener was a most momentous advantage to a person of Lord Fontenoy's frame of mind, and he prized him accordingly: his merit was, however, greater than Lord Fontenoy could possibly give him credit for,—the merit of not attending! This was a secret satisfaction known only to himself, though sometimes suspected by others:

> "The oppressor holds the body bound,
> But knows not what a range the spirit takes:"

And Arthur St. Clair's spirit had a very happy faculty of escaping from the oppression of Lord Fontenoy's, and even Lady Almeria's, discourse, to dwell on her who ever filled his mind.

Arthur was not always abstracted or taciturn: there are times and places for all things; and though generally tranquil and silent, yet, if occasion required, he could speak, and in good earnest, holding his own opinions with warmth and manliness. Though invariably silent, and possibly deaf, when in the common course of conversation propositions were brought forth too insignificant to be attended to, and as harmless as they were absurd; yet he was never backward in upholding, when with his regi-

ment, the raw boy who, fresh from school or home, sat wincing beneath the bullying arrogance of a superior officer: the humble servant of the church also, when sinking beneath the ridicule of the profane worldling, if he looked to Arthur for aid, never looked in vain: and the man of genius, whom the man of fashion would try to trample in the dust, would suddenly find inspiration by the words and looks of St. Clair; and, in his turn, with his support, would crush the vain butterfly who had attacked him. Still, generally speaking, Arthur was silently indifferent to what was passing around him,—just the companion best adapted to Lord Fontenoy; and most happy was he at Clinton Court, affording satisfaction to all parties.

Easter was over, the regular period at which the Fontenoys went to London. Their intentions were announced; and, in consequence, Arthur St. Clair mentioned his, of returning in a few days to Melcombe, where he shortly expected Lord Monckton and Miss Fitz-Norman, who were lately returned to England, as well as Lord Marston. Lady Almeria started at this information:

"Have I a rival, then?" she exclaimed; "or why is it that Arthur St. Clair does not propose?"

Lord Fontenoy also began to have the same idea; and loitering one morning in his lady's dressing-room, where, now that the hunting and shooting seasons were over, he was fain to take refuge for want of something else to do, he suddenly exclaimed, to her great surprise, "I wish we could manage the wedding before we leave the country!"

"The wedding!" said Lady Fontenoy; "what wedding?"

"My sister's."

"Your sister's!" exclaimed Clara, throwing down her pencil, and looking up in surprise: "your sister!—is Lady Almeria going to be married?"

"Why, yes—no—I suppose St. Clair will come to the point before he leaves Clinton."

Lady Fontenoy neither fainted, sighed, nor even started: indeed she only at first smiled a little, and, upon longer reflection, more so, till at last the ridicule of the expectation striking her more

forcibly than ever, she broke forth into an uncontrollable fit of laughter.

Happily, however, before her feelings were so manifestly expressed, Lord Fontenoy had discovered from the window the farrier approaching the house, and had quitted hastily the room to hold consultation with that important personage.

In her calmer moments, Lady Fontenoy, considering on what had fallen from her husband's lips, came to the conclusion that speedy steps should be taken to remove the delusion from Lord Fontenoy's eyes. As to the deluder, who she questioned not was Lady Almeria, she must take her chance; time to her must bring an effectual remedy: but the unveiling Lord Fontenoy's eyes Clara felt to be her duty; and therefore, the first opportunity which presented itself, she expressed, as delicately as she could, her firm conviction of the error his lordship and his lordship's sister were labouring under as regarded Mr. St. Clair's intentions. Now, next to his own, his sister's opinions were those Lord Fontenoy was most tenacious about, and, like all weak men, very tenacious upon the subject of matrimonial prerogative:

his wife's, therefore, however reasonable, were those he was least willing to attend to.

"If," said Lord Fontenoy in reply, with an air worthy of a sage,—"If Mr. St. Clair distinctly told you he had no intentions with regard to my sister—that he has intentions elsewhere—that his visit here has not been protracted upon her account, but merely for the sake of my society, or that of watching over the welfare of his niece, I will believe your assertion; otherwise you must allow me to continue in my original opinion, founded upon the assertion of my sister herself: Arthur St. Clair does admire Lady Almeria Delaval."

"Rather say," answered Lady Fontenoy gaily, "Lady Almeria Delaval does admire Arthur St. Clair. Why, he never speaks to her."

"To whom does he speak?"

Lady Fontenoy smiled.

"You have no desire to prevent the marriage?" continued Lord Fontenoy.

"Prevent it!" exclaimed Clara. "No: but before we talk of prevention or conclusion, it might be as well to ascertain the fact of commencement.

I should be delighted were Lady Almeria married —as happy as she herself could be; but I had thought the matter hopeless,—I had set Lady Almeria down as an old maid."

Lord Fontenoy assumed an offended air; and on such occasions he had a certain look of his sister's which was so disagreeable to his wife that, by way of diverting it, she told her lord that he might very likely be right; if so, of course there was nothing to prevent Mr. St. Clair proposing: but she thought the best way would be to let the affair take its course.

His lordship said, that he would think over the matter, and decide what was best to be done; and accordingly turned his steps towards his own room, there to meditate,—and seating himself in his arm-chair, he attempted to perform his intentions.

The wisest of men, it is said, experience their moments of distraction. If such be the case, the weakest cannot be well exempt, and may consequently be well excused. Lord Fontenoy was soon a victim to that calamity; — in thinking of his sister, he thought of Arthur St. Clair, who brought to his mind a gun which the latter had

given him; and that idea caused him to look at the gun hanging on the wall; — then ensued, proceeding from the above-mentioned weapon, thoughts upon guns in general,—pheasants—preserves, — Melcombe — Clinton — Somersetshire — Ireland,— his keeper there, his keeper here,— the rogue just parted with, the fool just taken,— till the original subject of laborious contemplation was as completely forgotten, as though no sister, or sister's love, had ever existed; and, fatigued by his mental exertions, his lordship consoled himself by falling asleep!

CHAPTER XXI.

Lady Almeria loved. She was aware of her own weakness, but with the conviction came the suspicion that her love was unrequited. Infatuated as she was, she could not imagine that, if Mr. St. Clair left Clinton Court without a declaration, love could form any part of his feeling towards her. Still, whilst he remained, there was hope; and until his departure she resolved not to despair. The day of departure for the Fontenoys was indefinite, but that of Arthur St. Clair was fixed decidedly. Two days yet remained ere he went — two days that proved replete with misery to Lady Almeria; each moment adding to her uneasiness, taking from her hopes, and slowly removing the veil which vanity had thrown over her senses.

Many a time and oft had Lady Almeria known disappointment in her marriage speculations. Mortification and wounded pride had she endured, but still her tenderest feelings had escaped unscathed; she had never, beyond twenty-four hours, eaten, slept, dressed, or talked the less well. It was reserved for Arthur St. Clair, most innocently, to teach her the error under which she had laboured as regarded former disappointments, and by her present feelings to make her understand how completely she was mistaken in imagining she had ever before felt the pangs of wounded affection.

Great and unfeigned was Lady Almeria's present grief. The day preceding that named for Arthur St. Clair's departure, she could not rest; she wandered from room to room, through the park and the shrubberies — to every place where he might possibly be, but in vain. "If he wished to see me, he might contrive it," thought Lady Almeria, as tired, broken-hearted and wretched, at the close of day, she sought her own apartment. "I will not go down to dinner," she added as she closed the door, — "*he* shall feel my loss, *he* shall miss my attentions, *he* shall know who it is that makes

Clinton Court an agreeable abode to a man of taste and sense like himself."

At that moment Mrs. Miller entered the room, presenting a packet in the form of a letter — "With Mr. St. Clair's compliments, my lady."

Words could not describe the transition from despair to joy, — from deep mortification to inflated vanity, — from anger to gratitude, which Lady Almeria's features portrayed as she snatched from her maid the important packet. With trembling hands and dazzled eyes she tore open the envelope. Miller, who was perfectly aware of her ladyship's expectations, had her eyes fixed upon her. The cover was thrown upon the floor, the inside letter unclosed, and — within presented themselves half a dozen Swiss views, done by a Geneva artist, which Arthur had promised her for an album! Deep, bitter, and severe, was her disappointment — the last hope was gone! Had he intended to propose, this would have been the opportunity; but he had no such intentions, — no; — she was deceived, injured, and wretched. She threw herself upon the sofa — desired her maid to leave the room — and

covering her face with her hands, gave way to a passionate flood of tears.

On the floor were strewed the drawings, with their various envelopes, and particular pieces of silver paper. Suddenly it appeared to Lady Almeria, as her eyes rested on the cause of her disappointment, that on one of the envelopes was some writing. She hastily arose and snatched up the important paper: it was so. Joy inexpressible! Arthur St. Clair's hand-writing was before her! But, alas! again disappointment was to ensue — the writing was not addressed to her. By accident he had enclosed the drawings in a sheet of paper on which part of a letter to his brother was written: these were the words which put the climax to Lady Almeria's woes, by giving to her knowledge a rival — and that rival Lady Fontenoy!

"Would to Heaven I had gone with you, as I wished! I should have been happier and better. As it is, I am miserable,—more so than when we talked upon the subject the evening before you sailed. It is impossible to live under the same roof with this angel, without adoration and pity. Infatuated

creature that she was, to marry him she did!—and for such a man, a creature like Clara to be . . . . . ."

Could Lady Almeria believe her eyes — could she read and retain her senses? A scream of agony burst from her lips as the paper fell from her hand!

"He loves!" she exclaimed, "he loves — but another! And that other is—oh, to have been spared any blow but this! — any human being but her to be my rival — her whom I despise — envy — hate! His indifference I could have supported, his coldness I could have pardoned — for any one but Clara Fontenoy! But I will be revenged: this paper is a treasure for my wrath—with it my vengeance shall requite the offence!—Fontenoy, where are you? Hear how your *friend* talks of you! hear his praises of *your* wife! Believe, if you like, that it is not *her* doing, *her* encouragement which has produced such feelings—feelings which have their echo in her own heart!"

For the moment, however, Lady Almeria's rash purpose was prevented; and when she ap-

proached the door in search of her brother, a faintness came over her,—she reeled towards a chair—on which she sunk senseless.

It was not in the nature of Lady Fontenoy to smile when others were sad,—to bear rancour (if any she ever felt) when sorrow clouded the brow of the offender. She had been amused when first her lord's simplicity unveiled his expectations of Mr. St. Clair marrying his sister; and still more diverted at his persisting in his error when no possibility seemed likely to arise to fulfil his hopes, judging either from Arthur St. Clair's manner, conversation, or family arrangements. Still, when Lady Fontenoy beheld Lady Almeria's haggard looks, eyes overflowing with tears, and trembling steps and hands, and knew Arthur St. Clair's departure to be the cause, she repented of the levity she had shown when first told of her feelings,—for great had been her doubts as to their intensity. Lady Fontenoy had seen her sister-in-law in love and out of love at least twenty times since their first acquaintance; that is to say, she

had seen her arrange herself for flirtation, as a matter of course, with every single man that came to the house: for, to do her justice, nothing could be more decorous than her intentions and proceedings; and the most agreeable man possible, if married, was never regarded with the least attention, compared to what she bestowed upon a very inferior one happily free from that incumbrance.

Often and often, during the last winter, had the velvet hat and scarlet plume been brought forth for conquest before the important day of the adventure in Clinton Chase; and as often had it been replaced in its bandbox more injured, alas! than causing injury to others.

Still Lady Almeria appeared as indifferent as the hat itself. She shook its plume; she tossed back her long thin curls with her long bony fingers; smiled disdainfully; and, flying to the piano, would screech with her raven note that precious balm composed by Shakspeare for a wounded heart, "Sigh no more, ladies."

But, alas! neither Shakspeare nor song could now avail. Lady Almeria loved in good earnest;

and he whom she loved was neither false nor fickle, but indifferent! Still she would cling to the belief that he once admired her: she would transfer his crime, in not continuing to do so, to Lady Fontenoy. It was her arts that had spirited away her lover, and not her own bygone years. Poor Lady Almeria!—little had she known the real passion of love: poor instructors indeed had her former admirers been, to make her now bestow her heart, so completely unsought-for, upon the unworthy Arthur St. Clair! She was miserable. Clara saw her wretchedness. She knew that to attempt gaining her confidence would be vain, and consolation equally vain if she did gain it. One thing she had in her power, to divert her mind. It had been the custom for Lady Almeria to go to her aunt at Bath when the family went to London—a custom very favourable to Lady Fontenoy's interest; notwithstanding which, she was ready to forego it if a visit to London was likely to divert Lady Almeria's mind, and heal her wounded feelings.

For the purpose of making the proposal, Lady Fontenoy sought Lady Almeria's room. It

seemed to have been tacitly agreed upon by these two ladies that outward ceremony should be the bounds of their intercourse. In rooms common to all, they met, conversed, were polite, and sometimes even jocose; but into the privacy of each other's apartment neither lady presumed to intrude herself upon the other. Still, on this important day, in a cause which Clara deemed nothing less than *vital*, she ventured to overstep the boundary of their intimacy, and lightly treading along the gallery leading to her apartment, ventured to knock at the door. It was necessary to repeat the knock, owing to voices loud and incessant within. "Strange," thought Clara, "that so haughty a dame should condescend to talk so familiarly with her maid!" At length, after a third knock, Lady Almeria's voice was heard in a most querulous manner. "Who is there?—What do you want?—Come in."

Lady Fontenoy obeyed, and found herself in the presence of Lady Almeria, stretched upon a sofa, her face swelled with anger and grief. At a little distance, with his hat pushed down on his forehead, his eyes bent on the ground, and his

arms folded, stood Lord Fontenoy. He did not appear to observe Clara's entrance; but Lady Almeria gave a spring from the sofa, uttering a cry of alarm. Her face, which was before inflamed by passion, now turned sallow from fear.

But she had courage, or impudence enough, knowing as she did how successfully she had just imprinted their mutual wrongs upon her brother's mind, to say, "What means this intrusion, madam?"

Lady Fontenoy was a person whom it was difficult to offend, and hardly possible to provoke to anger. Insulting as was her ladyship's appeal, it produced no other reply from her than, "I beg your pardon; if intrusive, I can easily retire." And she was bending her steps towards the door, when Lord Fontenoy, starting from his reverie, and seizing her arm, exclaimed,

"No, madam, you shall not retire: stay, and if either you can or dare, vindicate yourself from the foul aspersions cast upon your character."

Lady Fontenoy spoke not, but regarded her husband and his sister with profound astonishment, each being in the highest state of excite-

ment. As far as Lady Almeria was concerned, the cause might be divined; but her lord was a man of such general calm, if not cold feelings, that, unless afflicted with temporary insanity, his rage was perfectly unaccountable. It was but half an hour since they had parted just as good friends as usual: he had asked her commands to the stable, and thither she thought he had repaired, in perfect harmony with herself and all the world. Now, she found him in his sister's room, —a room as little frequented by him as herself, — furious, rude, and unmanly. Something whispered her, however, that the secret of the whole business rested with Arthur St. Clair — that he was the fertile source of the discomposure she witnessed; but why she herself was implicated, was far beyond her power of comprehension. She was not long in suspense.

It was a very rare occurrence for Lady Almeria to find herself in a majority on any question, foreign or domestic: in this instance, however, she triumphantly found herself two to one! Such an advantageous position was not to be wasted in

vain clamour, only of use to conceal weakness, as her former experience could well prove: reserving, therefore, that weapon for future exigencies, she assumed for present use the tone of dignity; and, waving her long thin arm, rendered still more like that of a skeleton by preposterous *gigot* sleeves, she said with emphasis—"It is impossible for me to surmise why you have sought my presence, Lady Fontenoy, as your conscience must tell you how grossly you have injured me: though, alas! the decoying a lover from your sister by means of your base arts, is an injury of light nature in comparison to your conduct as a wife,—married to such a man!—noble in mind as in form! You, too, the mother of his child! And you . . . . to . . . . In short, *I* dare not speak. To my virgin mind your conduct is such that I cannot venture the discussion . . . . unmarried, young, unsophisticated, ignorant, as I am, it is not for me to express the nature of your misconduct. As regards myself, I forgive you; but as regards that injured being your husband,—never, — no, never, Lady Fontenoy, will I again

live in sisterly communion with you ! . . . . with you . . . . the . . . . base betrayer of . . . . a husband's honour !"

The whole scene was so extraordinary, so perfectly incomprehensible to Lady Fontenoy, that, when her sister-in-law ceased, she could only gaze —first at her lord, transfixed with his back to the door, and then at Lady Almeria, pacing the room backwards and forwards on high tragedy stilts. At length, however, she spoke.

"Lord Fontenoy, will you have the kindness to explain to me your sister's meaning ?"

"Clara,—Clara,—you know too well her meaning !"

"I give you my sacred word . . . ."

"Perjure yourself not, vile woman !" — screamed Lady Almeria, stopping short, and regarding Lady Fontenoy as though she would destroy her ; — "you well know that Mr. St. Clair is the object of our discussion."

"I am happy to hear it ; for I had imagined that I was in some way implicated in what you were talking of."

"Shame, shame ! You well know Mr. St.

Clair was the subject of our conversation, as connected with yourself. You start, Lady Fontenoy; but answer me one question,—For whom has Mr. St. Clair been so long a visitor in this house? what has been his object, his design? Did he, as was natural, come here for Lord Fontenoy's society? did he come to be near his niece? did he come here with the idea of finding a wife? for, unmarried as I am, I might have been his attraction. Not at all: for months has he haunted the house with his vile presence—by his deceitful conduct leading me into a most fatal error for my peace, and not only deceiving me, but imposing also upon my brother and the whole neighbourhood, in order to hide his vile intrigue with yourself."

The parties were too nearly connected to make it possible for Lady Fontenoy to smile; otherwise there were parts of Lady Almeria's harangue that, for a woman to have uttered who was neither mad nor a fool, were too ludicrous for the solemnity of the occasion and the gravity of the accusation. Lady Fontenoy was too much bewildered to smile; and, with a contemptuous curl of her upper lip,

she walked towards the window to await the time when she should be allowed to depart; simply observing to Lord Fontenoy, that she should be glad to retire; and that if *he* had any accusation to make against her, she should be ready to attend to him in her own room.

Lord Fontenoy moved away from the door, and throwing his hat from his head, which he seemed to have retained there from absence of mind, he discovered to his wife a brow of such deep care, and a countenance so sad, so oppressed with grief, that in any one would have moved her to pity; but in him whom she had once so tenderly loved, and whom she knew to be of too phlegmatic a nature to be moved by the ordinary occurrences of life, the expression was so striking, that she now first began to tremble in wondering what uncommon circumstance had occurred.

"Lord Fontenoy! what is the matter? Speak, I implore you—tell me everything—by what delusion are you infatuated?"

"Read this, Clara—read this," said Lord Fontenoy, placing in his wife's hand the paper that had so accidentally fallen into Lady Almeria's possession.

Lady Fontenoy read it, as she was desired. She found nothing therein to form matter of accusation against herself, or against any one. It was a sad confirmation of fears she had ever shut her eyes to, and at times believed to be unfounded—Arthur's love for herself! But in other respects the paper was harmless; and if it had not been shown to Lord Fontenoy with the aggravation which Lady Almeria's disappointed affection made her so well know how to give, the paper might and ought to have passed instantly from her hands to the flames, without any other notice being taken of it, or harm ensuing. Compassion for St. Clair it decidedly raised in Clara's mind, added to contempt for those who could thus betray what she trusted accident, and not design, had placed in their hands.

"Where might you get this paper?" demanded Lady Fontenoy.

"My sister can tell you."

Lady Almeria briefly related the circumstance. Lady Fontenoy sighed heavily. She looked with pity at her husband, who, with his face covered by his hands, leant on the chimney-piece.

"Fontenoy, I am going to my dressing-room; let me entreat you to follow me thither. This paper opens my eyes to a grievous truth; but one of which I was not aware ——"

"I know not and care not what *you* may be aware of; all I know is, that Mr. St. Clair is a base, hypocritical, canting scoundrel, and that his blood shall answer for concealing his designs upon my wife beneath the mask of love for my sister."

As Lord Fontenoy spoke, both of the ladies gave a faint shudder: Clara clasped her hands in silent misery, whilst Lady Almeria begged him to be calm.

"Well, well, I will do my best. But as to you, Lady Fontenoy, go to your room: I will join you there instantly."

CHAPTER XXII.

In the seclusion of her own apartment, Lady Fontenoy tried to arrange her scattered ideas. That the folly of her lord and the ire of his sister had some foundation, the paper she had just read but too well confirmed; and when once considered in the light wherein Lady Almeria's jealous fury chose to place it in her brother's eyes, there was no knowing to what extent they might carry their fury and folly, both as regarded Arthur and herself. Lady Almeria's conduct was unpardonable, atrocious, and unwomanly; her only excuse, disappointed affections. The greatest distress, however, in Clara's mind, was Lord Fontenoy. His sister's ire and impertinence were too contemptible for a moment's thought; not so as regarded her husband. Though weak, he was not wicked; though

cold, not absolutely unfeeling :—he was evidently deeply grieved : and though there was nothing which could criminate her or any one,—for Arthur could not be blamed for the accidental discovery of his private sorrow addressed in confidence to his brother,—still she knew Lady Almeria's malicious nature too well not to feel that it was the colour she had given to the letter, not the letter itself, which had been the cause of Lord Fontenoy's grief and anger. She was almost assured that, had the letter fallen first into his hands, he would either not have understood it, or have scrupled to confess to information gained by such means. No—it was the female hand, the female ire, the female littleness of spirit, which she traced in her lord's conduct ; and doubting, even trembling, as to how far that malign influence might extend, or have already extended, she sat down to await her husband's promised visit.

The hand of the pretty French clock over the chimney-piece pointed to half-past twelve, when Clara threw herself into the arm-chair opposite, to reflect and sorrow over the scene of the morning. A full hour elapsed, and still no Lord

Fontenoy appeared. Clara began to be seriously uneasy; all her hopes of arrangement rested with a private and early interview with Lord Fontenoy. She knew that she possessed some influence over him, and felt assured that her gentle power might possibly stifle that hydra-headed monster jealousy, which Lady Almeria, so grievously afflicted with herself, had contrived to raise within her brother's bosom. The longer the interview was delayed, the more difficult would her task become; and as time wore away, and he appeared not, but, as she sadly feared, still remained with his sister recounting their imaginary wrongs, Lady Fontenoy began to tremble lest the heads of the monster would so increase in number, that neither her single arm, nor even that of Hercules himself, would be able to combat with and subdue them.

The thought of Arthur St. Clair also crossed her mind. He was to leave Clinton Court that day. What must he think of her absence all the morning? She walked to the window, and saw his travelling carriage depart with his valet, he himself intending to ride on horseback. "If Lord Fontenoy does not soon come, I must go down-stairs," said

Clara. At that moment a man's step was heard in the passage: it approached her door, and a knock was given. "Very formal of his lordship," thought Clara. She answered, "Come in." The door opened, and Arthur St. Clair entered!

"Good heavens! Mr. St. Clair, how came you here?" exclaimed Lady Fontenoy, pale as death.

"Am I wrong in intruding? I come to take my leave; for I have been hoping to see you all the morning. Pamela tells me you are not well, and that accounts for your not appearing at luncheon — which, by the way, Pamela and I had entirely to ourselves. I could not leave Clinton Court without bidding you farewell, and having the *entrée* of this room, I presumed to seek you here. I fear, however, I am rather in your way. You look pale; are you really ill?"

"Oh no, not at all—Pamela was mistaken. But is the luncheon ready? I will go down-stairs with you and have some."

It was evident to Arthur that Lady Fontenoy was discomposed. "I am sure," he said, "you have been annoyed by something. Am I impertinent in imagining Lady Almeria to be

the cause? She has been in a dreadful state of temper for the last two days: to me she is rude, Pamela she scolds, and, I fear, she has presumed to offend you."

"Offend indeed!—She is beneath my anger, and too contemptible a person to talk of. Happily, I shall soon be in town; when I shall shake off, for a time at least, if not entirely, that . . . . But ask no more questions—let us go to luncheon."

At that moment a heavy tread was heard in the passage, which made Clara give a slight shudder. Well did she now recognise Lord Fontenoy's step; and, innocent as was his visit, she would have given worlds to see St. Clair vanish into the earth. For a moment she thought of another door through her bed-room, by which there was egress to a back staircase. But why adopt the cautions of guilt? How could she propose to St. Clair such a proceeding without time to explain her reasons, and how prevent his exit being seen by the servants who might be on the staircase? St. Clair saw her agitation without comprehending the cause; he also heard the ap-

proaching step, which, as might be expected, proved that of Lord Fontenoy. He entered the room.

"Now, pray Heaven," thought Clara, as Lord Fontenoy stood gazing now at his wife, now at Arthur St. Clair—"pray Heaven that my husband be only for once endued with common sense, and then perhaps all may yet be right! for it is impossible to look at St. Clair and imagine he could harbour evil against any one; nor is it possible that before him Lord Fontenoy should continue the tone he assumed in his sister's room,—a tone as ill-bred as unwarrantable."

Poor Lady Fontenoy! she had yet to learn how far worse folly is to deal with than vice.

Bishop Watson said, though perhaps not in the exact words, "that it was as difficult to thrust a cannon-ball into the muzzle of a musket, as to drive into the head of a common-minded man any object of superior intelligence." But if ordinary minds were only guilty of what they reject, and not what they imbibe, they would be a less noxious race. The mischief of their folly lies more in what they believe than in what they disbelieve. True it is, they cannot compass elevat-

ed ideas, but they greedily swallow all that more exalted minds refuse. So, Lord Fontenoy, having imbibed the subtle poison his sister had instilled into his veins, it became a part of himself, and he neither could nor would part with his ill-gotten store. It filled his brain, where there was no room for a counteracting idea; and he entered his wife's room as much convinced that he was wronged, as though he had all the proofs which the far-famed and far-brought witnesses in "the trial" of the last reign, could bring together.

England is a strange, inconsistent country. In the days of the trial alluded to, Vice, under the plea of decorum, stalked barefaced. Half the world burnt their newspapers ere they were read; the other half bound theirs when carefully perused; and the government of the country, in its *ultra virtue*, countenanced by their support one of the most immoral proceedings that ever was witnessed in England, or perhaps in any other civilized country in the world!

But what, it will be asked, has this remark to do with the tale before us?—Nothing, absolutely nothing. It is only a slight digression, by way

of avoiding what would be better undescribed—the interview between Lord Fontenoy, Clara, and St. Clair, which produced a discussion rude to her feelings and insulting to her honour! Lord Fontenoy by turns threatened, blustered, and groaned; at one moment attacking his wife with the greatest vehemence, and the next sinking his rage in unfeigned distress. Arthur St. Clair was calm, honest, and manly: absurd as he was, he felt for Lord Fontenoy; he attempted no defence,—he neither denied the writing nor the sentiments contained in the letter Lord Fontenoy continued to brandish in his hand. An avowal so honest might have disarmed a more violent man than Lord Fontenoy; and a civil intimation on his part that, under such circumstances, he must decline the honour of receiving him as his guest in future, would have quietly arranged the matter. Lord Fontenoy's failing, however, was folly, and not violence. His sister had dwelt so much more on the crime as that of Clara than of St. Clair,—had so anxiously endeavoured to extenuate the faults of him she loved, at the expense of her whom she hated, in the hope that if Lady Fon-

tenoy were driven from the house, Mr. St. Clair might remain,—"for love will hope when reason would despair"—that his attack was directed much more against his wife than against Mr. St. Clair. Notwithstanding her assertions to the contrary, he was firmly persuaded she had summoned Arthur to her room to meet him, and beard him in his castle! Nor would he credit her assurance that not one word had passed between them of the prior events of the morning.

"It is all very well, madam—very well indeed," said Lord Fontenoy; "but when a woman has been for months in the habits of deception, her word is perfectly without value. In a court of justice no one would attend to you. I saw your agitation when I entered. You may imagine me a fool, but I am not so great a one as not to have seen the disturbed air you *both* had when I came into the apartment!"

"How could I be otherwise than agitated, after the scene in Lady Almeria's room? and why should your presence be in the least a surprise to me, when I had been in expectation of your arrival for the last hour and a half?" replied Clara.

"You may say what you please, madam; all I say is, your behaviour has been *most* abominable: *you* have ruined my sister's hopes—*my* peace—*your* child's——"

Clara would hear no more. St. Clair, whose colour had been gradually rising as the words of Lord Fontenoy increased in vehemence, now looked nearly as angry as his lordship. His eyes sparkled with indignation at the unwarranted attack upon Lady Fontenoy, and he was evidently awaiting only his lordship's silence to give his ire vent, in defence both of her and himself. Interference was highly necessary: with an air of command, therefore, Lady Fontenoy addressed her husband.

"Lord Fontenoy," she exclaimed, "if you have the common feelings of a man—I do not say of a gentleman,—cease this discussion for an instant." Then turning to Arthur she added, "Mr. St. Clair, the quarrels between a man and his wife, you must be aware, are sacred—they are not for a third person's ear. Accidentally you have been present at this discourse, and accidentally your name has been introduced therein: do me the greatest favour, the last

I shall probably ever ask of you—quit this room instantly, and forget all you have here heard and witnessed. Farewell! you have your own happy home to return to; your own good feelings to support you; the affection of numerous friends to compensate you for the loss of those this house contains — a loss which you can hardly regret. *I* thank you for the satisfaction your visit has afforded *me*, and *I* ask your pardon for its extraordinary termination; more particularly grievous to me, from these walls being *my* home, this house the house of *my* fathers."

As Clara spoke, she opened wide the door. Arthur hesitated a moment; then bowing haughtily to Lord Fontenoy, and gently touching the hand Clara extended towards him, he passed the next out of the room. At the door of the house his horse was in waiting, on which he hastily threw himself, and plunging the spurs into its sides, he was soon out of sight of Clinton, and at his own gate. Arrived at home, he shut himself up in his study, commanding no one to disturb him. Mrs. Macaroon wondered, and imparted her surprise to Miss Parsons when they next met; but

obedience was her business. Some hours passed away ere Arthur had courage to face even the glance of a hired domestic.

In the mean time Clara was still combating all the vials of wrath which Lady Almeria, with the aid of her brother, seemed inclined to pour upon her devoted head. The important step gained of getting St. Clair out of the house ere her lord's folly had led him to utter that which, as a soldier and a man, was not to be brooked in his presence, was an inexpressible relief. He was safe; as for herself, she must try and pacify the unquiet spirits, not for her own comfort, for that she felt was gone for ever as far as home was concerned, but for the sake of appearances to the world and to the servants. One degree less folly on the part of her lord, and one degree less violence on the part of his sister, and Lady Fontenoy's expectations might have been realized; but, as it was, her hope was vain. If they were not the talk of the neighbourhood, it was the discretion of the neighbours, not of themselves, which prevented it; and that they were the talk of their servants, both Lord Fontenoy and his sister had the en-

tire credit. Lord Fontenoy, to be sure, only talked before the servants; but Lady Almeria was more communicative, and confided to Mrs. Miller her own version of all that had lately taken place in the house; and Mrs. Miller confided the same to the housekeeper, she to the cook, and he to the groom of the chambers, &c. &c.; so, as they sipped their tea over the housekeeper's fire, two days from that on which Arthur had quitted Clinton Court, they had a very comfortable discussion upon the state of affairs in the drawing-room.

"A sad business!" said the butler. "I always had my misgivings of that Mr. St. Clair. He is one of your sober wine-and-water gentlemen, who, in my opinion, are never to be trusted: there is always something to conceal, take my word for it, when a man does not toss off his glass like my lord and others I could name."

"But an ill-dressed gentleman to think of so fine a lady as her ladyship!" observed the valet. "He has not so great a choice of waistcoats as I have myself;—that eternal black velvet, I was sick to death at the sight of it! He has his coats from Paris, too. Shame upon him! depriving his ser-

vant of the perquisites he would otherwise get from a London tradesman."

"And his manners are very deficient," said the housekeeper: "not a word have I ever got from him, times and times that I have met him on the staircase. It is my belief he did not know who *I* was."

"He was a snug one," said the groom of the chambers; "enter when I would, I never found him and my lady *tate a tate* in my life, as the French say."

"To be sure not—it was *my* lady he was after," answered Mrs. Miller. "My lady was is hobject, not the countess. I could find in my art to tear is heyes hout! For certain sure, my lady has lost her last chance of a husband; Lady Fontenoy has done so much for her sister-in-law, with her wile harts, as my lady says."

"Well," observed the cook, "I hope matters will soon be put to rights, or I must seek another place: there is no pleasure in cooking for a family in the state this is in. Lady Almeria eat nothing yesterday but water-gruel; my lady dined with the children; my lord drank brandy and water,

hardly tasting a morsel of meat. One might as well be cook in a convent of monks as live here—or better, if all tales be true of the way they live and make merry."

Whilst the servants thus parleyed, their betters were in a state of positive misery. But miserable as they all were, it is some consolation to reflect that Lady Fontenoy was the least so. It is very true that the stings of conscience are the only pangs to be dreaded. Mrs. Carter said, excepting in cases of violent pain, life was always desirable; and it might also be observed, that, excepting in cases of guilt, no one need despair.

Clara had a high and commanding spirit; not one of words, but of actions; and one that was neither readily aroused, nor easily subdued. Mildness of temper was her ordinary character; but the same strong feelings which could be awakened by the gay into the most buoyant merriment, were at times susceptible of being aroused into anger by the unkind.

Of this circumstance, however, neither Lord Fontenoy nor his sister was aware. For the present moment Clara listened in silence to their

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taunts, their accusations, and their worse innuendoes: she blushed often, but for them, and not for herself. She saw Lady Almeria gradually encroaching upon her own power in the house, and by favour of Lord Fontenoy; — she even heard their future plans discussed without her being consulted. She gathered from their discourse that a visit to Ireland was in project. Now, without Lady Almeria, Clara had no objection whatsoever to go there; but with her, it was as impossible as it was to prevent her being of the party, governing her brother so completely as she now did, through the medium of *compassion*.

Lady Almeria was in the habit of affecting great love for her native land: "dear Ireland! happy Ireland! clever Irish!" and so forth, were expressions as familiar to her lips as household words; and all relating to a country she had not visited since she was a child! She never failed to wear shamrock on St. Patrick's Day, or to have a print of "Ireland's poet" hanging in her dressing-room!

With such patriotic feelings, Lady Fontenoy saw that the Irish excursion must include her

ladyship. She sat down to reflect upon what was to be done, and at length determined that she herself should be the excluded person! Her only alarm was on the subject of her little boy; but Lord Fontenoy did not like children — they really worried him; and as to Lady Almeria, they did not wait for her dislike—with one accord every child that came in her way appeared to regard her as an enemy. Even little Pamela could only be brought to bestow a half-sulky kiss in return for a doll, as if she divined that no kindness was intended to herself, in that, or in a necklace and box of *bons-bons*, upon which Lady Almeria had expended certain monies in the hopes of propitiating the good favour of Arthur St. Clair. It was not therefore probable that this ill-used pair, as they styled themselves, would take her child with them; and over Pamela they had no control.

Lady Fontenoy's mind was made up. Had she even hesitated, she would have done so no longer, when her maid inquired of her one morning,

"I suppose, my lady, you will not take all your best gowns with you? The sea-water will be the ruin of them. My lord's valet says, he had two

waistcoats and a new pair of silk stockings spoilt the last time he went over to Ireland. Indeed, but for love for your ladyship, I do not think that I should venture there myself. I am not vastly fond of salt-water; and though I understand Fontenoy Castle is a grand place to look at, yet it is but a tumble-down concern in the inside."

"You need not distress yourself upon the subject of accompanying me to Ireland—I am not going there."

"Lord! my lady, you do my heart good to hear you! I thought your ladyship would never give up going to London."

At the period Lady Fontenoy was first introduced to the reader's notice, a goodly personage called the Earl of Rosmoor also made his appearance on the stage in the character of guardian to her ladyship. This personage still existed at Rosmoor Hall, leading much the same sort of life as formerly described. In one respect only he was not so well off as heretofore—he had lost the company of his niece;—and though a man of no very

deep feeling, he was certainly attached to her. Her gaiety amused him—her beauty he liked to gaze at, and was pleased to hear admired; and, altogether, the happiest time of the year to him was when she paid her annual visit. He certainly would have liked the visit still better without Lord Fontenoy, whom he could never quite forgive for having carried off from himself and son the prize he intended to have secured to the latter for the good of both. In fact, though they were both selfish, narrow-minded, and dull, the two earls did not suit each other. Lord Rosmoor had the better sense of the two — Lord Fontenoy possessed the most feeling. But the former would never have had the weakness to listen to the sister's aspersions against his wife; or, if he had been betrayed into the momentary folly, his feelings would have been too little interested to make him sacrifice his domestic comfort for the sake of punishing his wife. He would have forgiven or forgotten the whole business for his own convenience, and from the cold calculations of a man fond of himself and of no one else; not for the sake of others, or from any christian principle of charity.

It was to this uncle that Clara addressed herself on the subject of her domestic troubles; and although the imparting matrimonial griefs is in general like the pouring out of water, she knew well whom she was addressing. Lord Rosmoor would not have risked his life in her cause, like some Paladin of old; but, at the same time, he would as little dream of assuming, according to modern custom, that the husband is infallibly right, and the wife invariably wrong. She also knew that her society was acceptable at all times; and, from certain recollections of sundry disputes about the best manner of rearing pheasants, drawing a river, and other country and sporting subjects, between the two earls, she also knew that she should be more acceptable without her husband.

Assigning therefore her reasons, she named an early day for being at Rosmoor Castle; and to her letter received the following reply:

"D^{r}. Clary.

"I shall be delighted to see you and your children. I never heard of anything so absurd as L^{d} Fontenoy: if he is of so jealous a dispo-

sition, he ought to have married an ugly woman, and not a handsome one like you, Clary. But I must say, I always thought that St. Clair a sneaking sort of a fellow: I could never make him out—though he did save Johnson's life, who is now become quite my right hand as a keeper. Not that there was any harm in his writing to his brother about his admiring you; because it was the most natural thing in the world. I would write to Fontenoy, and tell him so, only I have just now so much business on my hands; and he is so obstinate, that there would not be much use in my taking the trouble. You will find no one here but the Monks and Milbank. Well, if you had taken *my* advice, my lady, you would not have had to complain of your husband; for you might have twisted Milbank round your little finger had you liked. I intend asking all the neighbourhood to dinner soon; but I shall await your arrival to arrange it all for me, as in former days. I have no news but that the Thrushes are going to Italy, and have let their place to an odious poaching fellow called Sparkes. Your friend Mrs. Compton has turned Methodist, they

say, and goes to morning and evening meetings every Sunday. Captain Belvedere is dead. I shall send the horses to meet you at the Bull, if I hear nothing to the contrary, on Tuesday next.

"Your affectionate uncle,

"Rosmoor."

CHAPTER XXIII.

Clara's determination to visit her uncle occasioned no small surprise to Lord Fontenoy, when imparted to him. In his frequent conferences with his sister, the latter had led his lordship to believe that the only way of bringing his wife to a just sense of the indecorum of her conduct was by carrying her amongst utter strangers, to some spot remote from her own paternal domains, where her character might be so thoroughly subdued, that, in future, no person should presume upon her liveliness—and, had she dared, Lady Almeria would have said, levity of manner—so far as to admire her sufficiently to record their feelings upon paper, even in an unfinished letter to a brother in the West Indies!

According to this advice, the journey was ar-

ranged, as has been shown, without consulting Lady Fontenoy; it having been sagely observed by Lady Almeria, that she would be sure to object, and it would increase dissensions. *Ce qu'on dit et ce qu'on pense* are very different things, as some amusing French prints have lately exemplified; and whatever Lady Almeria might express, her thoughts were, "Fontenoy is so weak, that if his wife remonstrates at this early stage of the plan, I am certain he will yield. No: let me first make him send over his dogs, guns, and shooting pony, and then I care not for her ladyship's tears or entreaties — the day will be mine! Fontenoy will follow his household deities, I am assured, — and his wife must accompany him. Dear Ireland! I shall see you at last." And Lady Almeria sunk into a chair quite overcome by the delightful picture that her imagination presented. She saw herself supreme at Fontenoy Castle, as an Irishwoman, and Lord Fontenoy's sister and adviser—the regulator of an ill-conducted household, from the mistress downwards—the support of a brother *unhappily* at variance with his wife; a variance she had already re-

solved to promulgate, through the medium of a correspondent whom she occasionally addressed in Ireland: and from this clever and amiable conduct she intended to reap the reward of seeing Lady Fontenoy at her feet, soliciting, at *her* hands, the boon of a husband's favour, in order to reinstate her in the good opinion of the world!

In her first step towards the prosecution of this plan her ladyship was fortunate. Dogs, guns, and shooting pony reached Ireland in safety. The trunks were beginning to be packed; and in her anxiety to depart, Lady Almeria proposed sending her own maid to assist the house-steward in making preparations. Lord Fontenoy lent a willing ear; Lady Fontenoy was present, but made no remark.

The following morning arrived Lord Rosmoor's letter. Lady Almeria was struck dumb with astonishment! Some minutes had elapsed after her brother communicated the important intelligence ere she spoke. At last, by slow degrees, she muttered something about impertinent independence and bare-faced impropriety. She could not — nay, she *should* not go.

"Fontenoy," she exclaimed, at length,—"you will not allow your wife to visit her uncle?"

"My dear Almeria, how am I to prevent it?"

"*Prevent* it, brother!—Say *she shall not go* —say that you command her to follow you to Ireland,—that you will not allow that man Lord Rosmoor to interfere with your domestic concerns,—say ——"

"I think, Almeria, it would be better to give up the journey to Ireland altogether, and remain here, as then Clara would remain also."

"And half your establishment already gone?"

"True; but they might return."

"Remain then—settle your concerns your own way—stay here if you like—remain in your wife's house to see that wife intrigue before your face!"

"Intrigue!" said Lord Fontenoy, reddening: "that is a harsh word, Almeria."

"I beg pardon—*flirt* I should have said, for that is the modern acceptation of the term—but the meaning is the same. So, you remain beneath the roof of a woman who complains to her uncle of your ill-usage?"

"I do not know that she has complained."

"Not complained! Well, I care not — she is not likely to get much by provoking you to retaliate. Then she goes to Rosmoor?"

"Yes," answered Lord Fontenoy; "and I must go to Ireland. I hate this place now."

"No wonder," groaned Lady Almeria.

"And I used to be so fond of it, — and Clara too. Do you not think, Almeria, that she looks ill?"

"She looks dull."

"And sad?"

"Yes, — sad; she is melancholy enough, there is no question."

"I thought so; — she must regret our differences," said Lord Fontenoy with a brightened air.

"Regret your differences!" said his sister, trembling at her brother's softened manner. "*She* regret! — no — she regrets some one else, take my word for it — nothing more."

"I may have been harsh — I think I *have*," said Lord Fontenoy, covering his face with his hands.

"Harsh, Fontenoy! — folly! — You harsh! Her dejection is easily accounted for, — has she not lost her lover?"

Could Lady Almeria have imagined the pang her words inflicted upon her brother — the only being on earth who, even slightly, valued her — she would have hesitated before she uttered them: but disappointment had rendered her temper still more sour, and her naturally bad judgment was completely overwhelmed by anger. The word *lover* fell heavily upon Lord Fontenoy's heart; for if he were capable of feeling real affection for any one being, that individual was his wife. He might deem his sister's understanding to be superior, and consequently lend himself more easily to her guidance; but his love, as far as his nature allowed of such a sentiment, was Lady Fontenoy's, whilst his feeling towards his sister was a mere habit contracted in childhood.

Weak people are ordinarily suspicious of affection—they imagine in general that they are either undervalued or unbeloved; and Lord Fontenoy was not without this failing. He knew his sister to be fond of him, and therefore clung to her in

his distress; abandoning the woman he really loved, upon the vague supposition that she liked another.

"You are my only friend," said he to his sister: "now that Clara cares for me no longer, I have only you!"

With the disposition of a fiend, the rancorous Lady Almeria listened to her brother's melancholy appeal, and approved and confirmed him in his misery. Bitterly, however, did she one day repent her behaviour,—or rather, suffer for it,—but that day was to come. For the present her feelings were very different, and she even became satisfied with the idea of Lady Fontenoy's visit to her uncle.

It was determined that as soon as Lady Fontenoy should depart for Rosmoor, her lord and his sister were to start for Ireland; Lady Almeria having, on consideration, become reconciled to the arrangement. Though, to be sure, Clara would be a great lady, even at her uncle's, and would be at no very great distance from Melcombe, the owner of which had already visited at Rosmoor, and might do so again; but then, she herself would be mistress of her brother's house—the

head of his establishment—queen of his society—and, in short, situated exactly as she had hoped some day to be when she laboured so industriously to marry him to the dowager before mentioned, whom, had her projects not failed, she intended to have governed when living, and to have benefited by when dead.

Whilst the earl, with his sister by his side, was rapidly conveyed from Clinton Court to Castle Fontenoy, and his lady with equal speed pursued her way in company with the children to her uncle's at Rosmoor, Arthur St. Clair was sad, though not solitary, at Melcombe. Besides the Moncktons, he had Lord Marston to entertain; but never was well-intentioned host, with really beloved guests, so sorely troubled in the task: his even spirits had deserted him, his absence of mind was strangely increased, and it required no great penetration in his guests to see that he was unhappy. Friendship with them was not merely a name: they respected his feelings too much, from whatever source they might arise, to attempt to force his confidence, or even to betray their observation of his grief.

The particulars, however, of Arthur's private feelings we shall not enter upon — they who have known love under similar circumstances can comprehend them ; those who have not, must be referred to other pens than ours : for as the description of happiness is said to be flat ; with one or two splendid exceptions, it is doubtful whether that of love be not so too. We feel that it would be decidedly so in our hands, and fear that it *has* been as far as we have ventured upon that treacherous ground.

If Lord Monckton paid his visit to Arthur St. Clair with the same intentions he entertained early in their acquaintance, he certainly took his departure entirely hopeless of success, and for ever resigned the prospect of seeing him his son-in-law ; for little doubt existed in the minds of himself and Miss Fitz-Norman that love — probably unfortunate — was the cause of their friend's evident dejection.

Very different, however, was Miss Fitz-Norman from Lady Almeria; her disappointment produced pity, but not jealousy : and so truly did she value him, and so disinterestedly did she desire his hap-

piness, that in relinquishing her own hope, — if hope she had ever entertained, — she was quite willing to adopt, instead, the most unfeigned desire to see his love more prosperous and his spirits restored, and to be herself received by him and his future wife with the affection of a sister.

Whether such a philanthropical frame of mind had any source in the acquaintance she formed at Melcombe with Lord Marston, it is difficult to say; but it may be imagined otherwise, as Miss Fitz-Norman was not a woman to yield her heart willingly, and Lord Marston's perfections were not to be developed in a short acquaintance, unless to persons who think of nothing but rank and wealth in the choice of a husband. Perhaps under other circumstances, and on a more intimate acquaintance, Miss Fitz-Norman might have been more ready to receive the attentions which Lord Marston was evidently not unwilling to pay her; but at Melcombe it was quite out of the question. In Arthur St. Clair's presence, whom she did like, and who, hopeless as her attachment might be, was her *beau idéal* of all that was pleasing and noble in man, she could not readily turn to his friend,

who, intrinsically good as he was, had nothing in manner, conversation, or appearance, to compete with Arthur St. Clair, humble, quiet, and unassuming as was his general character.

The time was when the revenues of the post-office derived little benefit from the correspondence of Mr. Arthur St. Clair; but, with his importance, the numbers of his letters had gradually increased, and a very fair display of those proofs of remembrance, either pleasing or displeasing, generally graced his breakfast-table. About a week after the departure of his guests, Arthur saw, as usual, the important letter-bag when he descended to the breakfast-room. The contents were, in a leisurely manner, brought forth to light, and, amidst various other epistles, begging, friendly, printed, or on business, were two bearing the St. Clair coat-of-arms, in wax of the blackest dye!

The indifference of Arthur's manner vanished in a moment; and, with a trembling hand and anxious heart, he tore open one, proclaimed by the signature to be the writing of Mr. William St. Clair. Its contents were:

"My dear Arthur,

"I do not well know how to break to you in a sufficiently delicate manner the melancholy loss our family has sustained. It will afford you, however, great satisfaction, I am sure, to know that your excellent uncle is as well as we could reasonably hope for; and that his amiable wife, taking example by her husband's superior strength of mind, will, I trust and hope, suffer as little as can be expected from a woman of such feeling on so sad an occasion: and great as that feeling is, I have ever observed, during the long period of our acquaintance, that it has been tempered on the most trying occasions by the most perfect self-command; and in this particular instance, cruel as the blow is, I am happy to say, she does not seem inclined to display less fortitude than heretofore when tried by calamity."

"But, heavens! to what does all this tend?" exclaimed Arthur. "What can have happened? Edward! Ellen!—can it be to either of you that this cold-blooded epistle refers?" And with his eyes dizzy from apprehension, he cast a shuddering glance over a page in which appeared

much of sorrow, despair, never-failing misery, and resignation to the will of Providence, till at length was disclosed the cause of such long-winded and heartless phrases——Ernest St. Clair was no more!

Extremely as he was shocked at the unexpected intelligence, equally referred to in the next letter he opened, nevertheless a weight of horrible surmise was removed from Arthur's heart. Before reading the other epistle, however, we will not dismiss that of Mr. William St. Clair without imparting the concluding paragraph, which contained the essence of the whole letter:

"In this melancholy state of the family, it is your duty to come instantly to London, as in his paternal kindness my brother seems to wish, now that he is deprived of Ernest, to be completely reconciled to that part of his family whom circumstances have of late separated from him. I allude to your brother Edward, now, as I need not point out to you, by the sudden demise of poor Ernest, the next in succession, should we be so unfortunate as to be deprived of my brother,—an evil, I trust and believe, that may be long averted.

"I am sure my brother's kindness with regard

to Edward will give you great satisfaction and pleasure, most particularly as his object in desiring to see you is to learn from yourself how your letters are conveyed to him, in order that Ernest's death may be communicated as soon as possible, so that he should return home with the least delay. I assure you, my brother Lord St. Clair is extremely anxious on this point; and he has become seriously uneasy about the climate. Twice yesterday evening he said, 'I wish they had never gone! Could I have foreseen this melancholy event, I would never have allowed Edward to accept the place.' And of every one he has seen he has made all possible inquiries about the length of the voyage, the air, the danger, &c."

Such was Mr. William's characteristic epistle, which Arthur threw from him, and took up the other, bearing, in a different form, equal impress of the writer, his aunt, Miss St. Clair.

"My dear Nephew,

"I lose no time in telling you, that in consequence of a fall from his horse yesterday, poor

Ernest expired a few hours since at his apartments in Grosvenor Street. I am not going to weary you with the customary cant of sorrow. It is an awful and shocking thing for a young man to be cut off in the prime of life, and hurried into another world with all his faults and follies upon his head. God reward him for his merits, and pardon his offences! But it has been so ordained by a wiser and more benevolent Judge than we can be ourselves; and to His decrees the most interested of us all, poor Ernest's sister, must submissively bend. She is greatly to be pitied, and I feel for her alone, as I have no personal regrets for the young man himself. My sole reason for making his death the subject of this letter, is to remind you that Edward now stands next in succession; that he is poor, exiled, and, possibly, ill! Lose no time, therefore, in hastening to London, in order, whilst his feelings are softened by his recent loss, to secure from St. Clair an allowance which shall enable Edward and Ellen to return instantly to England. You may possibly think, that just now St. Clair will be little desirous, or likely, to consider aught but his afflic-

tion; but, believe me, he mourns not for friend, companion, or relation—he mourns for his heir-presumptive! and his sorrows will cease when he remembers that, although Ernest is no more, yet Edward exists, to all intents and purposes as goodly an heir as he that is gone.

"But as I cannot think of delay, pray hasten to London, and as soon as possible let us snatch dear Edward and his affectionate little wife from the horrid island they inhabit. I write from my sister Willis's, where I have been for the last few days on my way from Bath to Scotland. She desires me to tell you that she has a bed at your service, if you like to profit by it. Your accession of fortune has marvellously increased your importance, as, with all your apathy, you perhaps may have discovered; but you must be prepared for a still higher grade amongst the St. Clairs, in consequence of the dignity which attaches to being brother to Edward, the heir-presumptive; which heir being absent, a kind of family regency must be regarded as in your hands. Ever your affectionate aunt,

"K. St. Clair."

"Poor Ernest!" said Arthur, with a sigh—"poor fellow!—whatever my brother may gain by his death, however indifferent my uncle may be to his loss; yet cold and dull as he was, I would rather he should have run a longer course than have been so prematurely cut off! I would rather that Lord St. Clair's heart should have been softened towards Edward, as his nephew and the husband of his child, than as his heir. However, thank God! he may now return. Poor dear Ellen, too,—how will her affectionate heart rejoice in being restored to her parents and child, without bestowing one single thought upon her newly-acquired importance, and without one selfish consideration of her own benefit! How delighted will she be that Edward and her baby should leave a climate reputed to be unhealthy! And Edward,—what pleasure he will have in seeing his dear little wife surrounded by the comforts her tender nature requires, and restored to the place in her parents' affections whence her marriage with him had removed her!"

As these thoughts passed through Arthur's mind, there was still a painful feeling mingling

itself with his pleasurable sensations; the distance—the time which must elapse ere Edward could hear of his opening prospects, and then again ere his return, every hour of which time would be passed in perils of the deep, or perils of disease.

Of course Arthur did not hesitate to obey the instructions given him to hasten to London; and at twelve o'clock on the following day he found himself at the door of Sir William Crawford's house, where he could always find a reception far preferable to that proposed to him by Mrs. Willis.

Sir William's honest nature could not conceal the delight he experienced at the prospects opening to those whom he called his children. "You had better make haste, however," he said; "for now that death has got into the house, Mr. William may begin to calculate upon his chance of the property and title, and for the good of that chance may not deem it advisable that Edward should be removed from the West Indies."

Arthur declared his perfect readiness to go instantly to his uncle; but added, "Still I think I ought to announce my approach by a note; for,

whatever Miss St. Clair may say, I am sure my uncle must feel poor Ernest's death extremely: old people, however callous, do not like to hear of death."

"Not death as the debt of nature, I grant you, —that comes home to themselves; but they care nothing about accidental death—it is the end they least fear,—their day of risk and danger is over. The only form in their eyes assumed by the King of Terrors is that of Time: they see his advancing steps, and, trembling and dismayed, watch the sands of life fast ebbing in their glass. Casualties find no place in their minds: with Time before their eyes, they are regardless of the every-day accidents in field or flood; a broken neck or a watery grave are indifferent to eyes fixed solely on that threatening scythe with which their enemy seems waiting to sweep them off. But if what Miss St. Clair told me some years back be true,—and from my own experience I have no reason to doubt the correctness of her judgment,—the feelings of the St. Clairs are not so delicately woven as to require very tender management. I remember well her saying to me, when looking at you and

your brother, then children and objects of great attention, ' Believe me, the hearts now so devoted to them would not weigh one ounce the heavier were to-morrow's sun to rise on their graves !' "

Sir William's opinion, formed by that of Miss St. Clair, was only too just. When Arthur was ushered into Lord St. Clair's presence by his lordship's particular footman, he found him in his comfortable library, by the side of a comfortable fire, with spectacles on nose and newspaper in hand, the picture of ease, contentment, and wealth. On the opposite side of the fire, in a similar armchair, with spectacles and newspaper as nearly as possible to match, sat Mr. William St. Clair !

" Well, this is very good of you, nephew—very good indeed, to come and visit us in our distress," said Lord St. Clair, dismounting his spectacles and laying aside his newspaper. " It is a long time since we have met, and I am heartily glad to see you. Why, you are in very good plight —you are twice the size you were when I last saw you !" (It was upwards of eight years since that period.) " Why, William, you never told me what a good-looking fellow Arthur was become.

Edward was always handsome, but Arthur is nearly, if not quite, as well-looking now. He has a look of Ernest, I think, also; yes, there is certainly a family likeness, something about the chin which reminds me of him very much, poor fellow! Ah, Arthur! that has been a sad business! But, however, we have many sources of consolation;" (Arthur looked somewhat surprised;) "he did not linger long, nor, considering all things, suffer much. He had the best advice, perhaps, in the world; and it is all very well Miss Taylor would not have him when he proposed for her, otherwise we should have had her grief to console."

"And her jointure to pay," added Mr. William.

"True," said his lordship; "and possibly a child or two to take care of."

"With all the trouble of a long minority," added Mr. William.

"Humph!" said his lordship; "that might or might not be. But mothers and guardians always fall out about the management of a child of any consequence. Everything is for the best,

however. If Ernest had not been beaten at the last election, we should now have had a vacancy for the county, and I dare say I should have been expected to bring Edward forward, which would have entailed over again all the trouble and expense of two years back. It will be quite time enough for Edward to stand the next election; by that time we shall have him and dear little Ellen home again. Well now, Arthur, tell us how we are to manage their recall in the surest as well as most expeditious manner."

Concealing as well as he could the disgust he felt at the unfeeling manner in which his uncles had discussed the loss of an individual whom but three days before they had professed to regard with the greatest affection, Arthur informed them of his usual channel of communication with Edward.

"Why, at that rate it may be full three months before they return," said Lord St. Clair in a disappointed manner.

"Very possibly."

"How very annoying! is it not, William?"

"Excessively so, brother."

"I have only heard once from Edward since he sailed," said Arthur.

"Oh, then—you *have* heard from him?" said the *anxious* uncle.

"Yes, I had letters, and so had Miss St. Clair, as well as Charles Mordaunt and the Duke of Ashford. Ellen also wrote to Lady Conway and others;—the dates were different—some earlier and some later than mine."

"What said he of the climate?"

"He had not been there long enough to judge."

"Let me see: they have two children, have they not?"

"Yes, two girls."

"What! no boys? Well, they may yet come; and I am told the climate of the West Indies has ruined many a child's health for life: it is perhaps as well as it is. Did he say how the girls were?"

"They have only the baby with them: Pamela is in England."

"In England! with whom, pray?"

"With Lady Fontenoy."

"Lady Fontenoy!—and how in the world came she with her?"

"She is a friend of Ellen's, and took charge of the child until their return."

"Very kind of her indeed!—But, under existing circumstances, I think, William, it would be as well for us to have the care of her: what say you? It would look better in the eyes of the world, and be a proof to Edward of my earnest desire to obliterate ancient griefs."

"Indeed," replied Arthur eagerly, "Lady Fontenoy is much too fond of Pamela to consent to give her up so readily; and, I imagine, would not consider herself justified in consigning her charge to any one without her parents' express sanction."

"Well, well, there is time enough to consider the subject," said Lord St. Clair. "But why did they not take the child with them?"

"The climate was the cause," answered Arthur thoughtfully.

"O that climate!" said the wonderfully enlightened uncle with a sigh.

"Brother, I have an idea," said Mr. William,

rising up with an air of importance, and placing his back to the fire, with the flaps of his coat under his arms,—"Brother, an idea has just entered my head. Your rank, your fortune, your station in society, entitle you to ask that which a less distinguished individual dare not do. Therefore, if I may advise, I would strongly recommend that you should instantly repair to the Admiralty,—state the precise nature of the case—the untimely end of poor Ernest,—the unexpected succession of Edward—his untoward absence—the necessity of his resigning his situation—the dangers of the climate,—in short, the absolute urgency of his immediate return; and therefore request that a fast-sailing vessel may be instantly despatched for the purpose of bringing him home."

"William," replied Lord St. Clair with an air of the utmost satisfaction, "I must say you are a very clever fellow; your idea is excellent, and I will order the carriage and depart instantly."

"Stop! gently," said Mr. St. Clair, laying his hand upon his brother's arm; "at this present moment it would *not* be *quite* decorous, not quite

proper, for your well-known equipage to be seen in public — the funeral is *not* over: but there is mine, which can be soon prepared; and in that, unadorned by a coronet, I flatter myself you might escape observation, particularly if you take the precaution of drawing up the blinds."

"Ah, very well; get your carriage to the door as soon as you can, and come with me yourself. And, now you mention it,—the funeral; Arthur, do you think of attending it?—I suppose not?"

Though great distress on the part of Ernest's relations Arthur was not led to expect, yet the total want of the common feelings of humanity, which threw a shade over even the hard features of John More when he gave him entrance, and rendered himself, on passing the threshold, serious, if not sad, was what he was little prepared for; nor, in two beings bearing the human form, such entire worldliness, even in a worldly age, as the conversation of his uncles had betrayed. He answered therefore with some asperity,

"I shall be extremely glad to mark my respect for the memory of a person so nearly allied to us

all in blood, by attending the funeral,—as also my sense of your lordship's loss in particular, being thus deprived in so sad a manner of an affectionate and favourite friend and nephew."

"Well, thank you; you are very kind. If Ernest had been my only nephew, the loss would have been greater; but having Edward and yourself left, I do not feel it so much."

Arthur could hardly forbear a smile at his uncle's consolation and opportune recollection of his nephews.

"As to the funeral," said Mr. William, "they are a sort of thing that I make it a rule to shun as much as possible. Three times have I seen the family vault unclosed,—and a most melancholy sight it proved. The first was when our father was buried; and the two others, at the funeral of Ernest's father, our brother Robert, and that of his wife. And I assure you I now shudder at the idea of all the coffins of the family arranged one upon another; and also the empty niches I beheld gaping wide for those who were to come after. The sight was sickening—distressing be-

yond measure for any nerves: it haunted my dreams for a month afterwards. I shall *positively* not attend."

"Nor have I any intention. Lady St. Clair, in her distress, was not unmindful of my welfare; and the first thing she said after hearing of Ernest's death was, 'Now, St. Clair, you must promise me not to go to the funeral; it will be too much for your sensibility.' Talking of which puts me in mind that Anne St. Clair has taken a crotchet in her head to go there. She has been almost upon her knees to Lady St. Clair to allow it; but she has been told that such a thing is quite out of the question: women never attend funerals; it is not only unlady-like, but, moreover, inconvenient;— indeed, servants are the only proper persons, as they can conduct themselves with the decorum requisite for the occasion, whilst those most interested would possibly not have sufficient command over their feelings, — and propriety should never be infringed upon. No; I shall send a good number of the servants, as I cannot have any dinners, or Lady St. Clair evening parties, before the ceremony is over: — the cook,

coachman, housekeeper, shall all go. It is very considerate of you, Arthur; but really, considering the trouble, and the unpleasant nature of the ——."

"I know what you would say, my lord," interrupted Arthur; "but my mind is made up; and if my cousin Anne likes to take the vacant place in my carriage, I should be most happy to escort her, and would pay her every attention her present unhappy state requires."

Lord St. Clair opened his eyes wide at Arthur's proposal. Mr. William St. Clair shut his; both, however, for the same purpose,—to see the better.

"Ah, sits the wind in that quarter!" thought the former. "Has Arthur any inclination for his young cousin, that he should make such a proposal?"

"Perhaps such a proposition may lead to an inclination," thought Mr. William, "and Anne will by that means be provided for."

"Well," said Lord St. Clair, after a moment's pause, and exchanging glances with his brother, "if you would like, Arthur, to talk to Anne herself on the subject, you can just step up into her

room. I hate scenes, and have therefore declined seeing her till she is more composed. I will ring for a servant to show you the way, and announce your intentions. She occupies the back drawing-room for the present; but you will find Lady St. Clair in the adjoining apartment, to whom, of course, you will pay your respects."

"I shall be most happy so to do," replied Arthur stiffly.

"And dine with us, I hope?"

"I am sorry that I have engaged myself."

"Already!" exclaimed Lord St. Clair.

"With one of the *family*, I presume?" said the decorous Mr. William.

"With Sir William Crawford."

"Friends are *not* relations," pronounced Mr. William.

"Most indisputably *not!*" answered Arthur, unable to repress a smile.

"Come, come, William, you must not expect too much from Arthur. *Les bienséances* are not learnt in a day; and he will improve. But I would advise you, Arthur, to remain in private as much as you can till the funeral is over. The

world is a terrible observer of the actions of great people."

Arthur again smiled, and observed, that, sheltered by his insignificance, he hoped to escape the severity of animadversion which personages of importance such as his lordship were liable to.

Profiting by the permission obtained, he repaired from the library, where reigned worldly decorum and no grief, to the drawing-room, in which he found unfeigned and unrestrained sorrow holding complete sway over the poor broken-hearted sister, in the person of Anne St. Clair.

Until the present moment Arthur really knew nothing of her; but after the specimen he had witnessed of the family that morning, it was impossible to imagine any state so thoroughly destitute of all comfort as genuine affliction beneath Lord St. Clair's roof; and to be able to afford consolation to her, by furthering her wish of attending her brother's funeral, and thus removing her from those she was with, was too simple as well as amiable a proceeding to be passed over by him. Poor girl! soothing indeed was Arthur's visit; for no friend had she seen since her brother's loss

but Lady St. Clair, who came for one hour each day to talk resignation, and Mrs. Willis, who succeeded her, to talk gossip for another.

Miss St. Clair, who might have been a kind friend to her in her affliction, she was afraid of receiving; as amongst that part of the family with whom Anne lived, she had always heard her aunt distinguished by the epithets of crazed, violent, and malicious; so that, sad from present circumstances, and naturally weak and timid, she would rather have died than look Miss St. Clair in the face, and would have even expected more commiseration from uncle William than from her. The quiet discourse, therefore, of a relative who, without affecting sadness, looked serious, was a greater balm than the poor girl had known for some days, most particularly when the grateful boon was offered of conveying her with him to St. Clair Abbey.

In a few days Arthur St. Clair pursued his way towards that place with his young companion, who, with the exclusiveness of sorrow, imagined that the silence and absence of mind in her cousin proceeded from the same cause as her own: but

very different was that from the case ; and as he leant back in the carriage his thoughts were alone filled with a letter he had that morning received, containing a few lines from Lady Fontenoy, in answer to as few, which he thought it incumbent upon him to write to her, as guardian to the little Pamela, informing her of the probability of Edward's speedy return. Lady Fontenoy's was a guarded epistle ; but the date of Rosmoor Hall was sufficient to explain everything to Arthur, independently of the spontaneous information that "Lord Fontenoy and Lady Almeria Delaval are gone to Ireland."

CHAPTER XXIV.

The bells rang merrily; and bonfires, giving light for miles and miles around, burnt fiercely in honour of the Earl of Fontenoy's return to the seat of his ancestors. Smiles were on every countenance, cries of joy in every mouth, and potent whiskey in every head. Lady Almeria, without that stimulus, was elated almost to intoxication; and with it, Lord Fontenoy was dejected almost to despair.

In vain did his sister's shrill tones give utterance to her raptures at being again in dear Ireland. In vain she besought her brother to partake with her in the amusement the drunken populace afforded from the window, or to make with her the tour of the house or the grounds: no efforts on her part could extract a responsive word from her apathetic brother, who, with his

eyes resting on the blaze of a large turf-fire, gave way to a train of undefined thought, in which, if there were any palpable form at all, it was that of Clara !

Without much penetration, he had observed that the appearance of his sister rather surprised the crowd who hung about the carriage, as they ascended the avenue to the castle; and he heard more than one voice exclaim, "Och ! sure it 's not the pretty lady we were told to expect. 'Tis her own ladyship we would see—the true countess, and the mother of the young lord. We thought she was come to live among us with his lordship and the young heir."—"Poor people !" thought Lord Fontenoy ; "they wish to see Clara and her little boy. Why would she not come amongst them ? No ; she prefers Rosmoor to a house of her own. She prefers the neighbourhood of Melcombe, and the possibility of seeing St. Clair. For though she professes to consider their acquaintance at an end, yet she could not prevent her uncle from inviting him to the house if he chose it; and he dislikes me so much, that he would ask him out of spite."

Such were Lord Fontenoy's meditations ; which, not very just towards Clara, were mixed up with long intervals of vacuity, and much that was trifling, with which she was nowise connected. Lady Almeria, in the mean time, had been taking a survey of the house, arranging her dress, deciding upon what rooms they should occupy when alone, when a small party, and when *en grande réprésentation ;* and considering how soon the first dinner could be given, and whether the public days could not be revived. After above an hour spent so agreeably to herself, Lady Almeria returned to the drawing-room, where she had left her brother, and where he still remained watching the flickering flame the turf emitted, totally regardless of her past exit and present entrance.

This apathy on the part of his lordship was not to Lady Almeria's taste, who was already beginning to exhibit symptoms of prosperity in being difficult to please. Somewhat sharply, therefore, she demanded what he was thinking of, and if they were ever to have any dinner ? Lord Fontenoy started, at a manner so unlike that which he was accustomed to from Lady Fontenoy. " Cer-

tainly,—I will ask for it," he replied calmly. "You are dressed, I see, Almeria: there was no necessity, unless you liked it. I hope you will excuse my sitting down as I am."

"Ah, you are quite right. I changed my gown merely to please the old housekeeper, who, I saw, was desirous of waiting upon me whilst my maid got some tea. First impressions are everything; so I make no doubt she was enchanted at my readiness to accept her services; and I wished her to understand I am not wanting in respect to you, or to old customs."

Proud was the step with which Lady Almeria entered the hall of her fathers, where the dinner was prepared, and sweeping up to the head of the table, there took her station; and sad was the countenance her brother wore as he placed himself opposite to her. Still it was not in the nature of his lordship to be wretched beyond consolation, with a well-covered board before him,—more particularly if that board was flanked, as in the present instance, at all corners by various bottles sparkling with their exhilarating contents and highly-polished labels.

Whilst her brother ate, and quaffed the generous liquors before him, his sister, more moderate, indulged in no excess but that of the mind. Would that it could be said, like "Lady Grace," she "thought *soberly!*"

The servants retired; and his lordship in silence sipping his wine, her ladyship sat lost in contemplation of the grim lords and ladies, and equally grim children, who ornamented the walls, dressed in every fashion, which, like their owners, had lived, died, and been forgotten, from the days of the battle of Agincourt to those of the battle of the Boyne. Pride and admiration swelled Lady Almeria's heart almost to bursting as she regarded the long line of high and mighty personages from whom she descended; and as she gazed, she thus mentally apostrophised her formerly turbulent, but now most tranquil companions!

"Happy, happy beings! to have lived before these degenerate times; to have run your race when noble blood was still respected, when that yoke of fashion was unknown beneath which we now are all obliged to bend the neck! Happy, thrice happy! to have ceased to breathe ere these level-

ling days, when the veriest *roturier* in the land, by aid of wealth or impudence, can force his way into the chambers of kings, to their councils, and their honours! Would that, like you, I had run my course! In your time a damsel of the house of Delaval was no insignificant personage in the creation; youths of the first families aspired to be of her household, and her waiting-women were of gentle blood! All eyes were upon her; her dress, deportment, frowns, and smiles, were objects of attention and humble imitation. Then was decorum rewarded; then was virtue upheld; then were vice and levity punishable by act of parliament." (Her ladyship apparently approved of the decapitation of Queen Mary and of Anne Boleyn, as well as of the white sheet of Jane Shore.) "Oh, fair beings! that I could hear your brocaded dresses rustle again in this apartment, as once they rustled when advancing in solemn majesty led by the ungloved hand of some high-bred courtier, with a sword ready to fly from its scabbard at any look that should do you dishonour! Well did Burke say that the days of chivalry were gone! What am I

in comparison with those who went before me ?—a poor neglected being,—a worm to be trodden upon, —of less importance in the eyes of the ignorant, tasteless, sordid world, than the wealthy wife of a fat grazier, or some pert miss presuming upon her rosy cheeks or heavy purse to render herself of consequence. What am I indeed ! What is even the Countess of Fontenoy ! But over that picture let us draw a veil : you, my ancestors, would have started from your frames, had her carelessness, childishness, indiscriminate friendships and society met your eyes ! But happily her folly in preferring to return to her uncle, instead of accompanying her husband here as Queen ——"

At that moment Lady Almeria's further reflections were cut short by a deep and heavy groan. Though no believer in the supernatural, yet so awful a sound, echoing still more awfully through the lofty and half-lighted hall, at a moment when Lady Almeria was fairly embarked in an address to the spirits of the dead, gave her ladyship's nerves a more severe shock than they possibly had ever received in her life ; and instead of

directing her attention to the real cause of the agitation,—her brother, who was senseless in his chair,—she directed her eyes towards the severe features of a female, in a widow's garb of the year 1500, with a row of beads in her hand, a crucifix at her side, and, as Lady Almeria thought, her large eyes fixed sternly on herself. It was not till she heard a second groan that her scattered senses were recalled, and directed to the true cause of alarm.

For once, Lady Almeria was natural, and starting from her chair, flew to Lord Fontenoy, screaming wildly for assistance: but her screams were unheard, on account of the distance of the servants' apartments; and bell there was none. To abandon her brother was impossible, whose only symptoms of life were his deep convulsive sighs. Lady Almeria bathed his temples with cold water, and applied her salts to his nostrils: in this state he continued for above ten minutes, when he began gradually to revive, and, after some little time, was sufficiently recovered to be able, with the assistance of his sister's arm, to reach the drawing-room, and extend himself upon a sofa.

There was something singular about the attack; and when her brother was well enough to listen to her words, she warmly entreated him to send for a physician. To this, however, he was decidedly averse, attributing his illness to the peat-smoke, or to his having fasted too long: and, indeed, it was not without some difficulty he would allow her to send for his servant, and to take what remedies the house supplied. Having, however, swallowed an ominous-looking potion of the housekeeper's recommendation, Lord Fontenoy retired to rest; and his sister shortly afterwards followed his example, and in the solitude of her own apartment gave way to reflections on the events of the day. It was in vain, however, that she attempted to fix her thoughts on her brilliant journey and triumphant entry,—her brother's illness haunted her imagination. Was it a delusion? or had she not observed, when first she caught him in her arms, that his face, in addition to its paleness, was slightly distorted? One thing was very evident,—it was some time before he recovered his bewildered senses; and even when he retired for the night, though unheard by any but herself, he addressed

her as Clara! calling her "love;" which, with all his affection towards her, was an endearing epithet he had never bestowed upon her, and which even now, with all her vanity, she dared not appropriate to herself. It was not, however, Lady Almeria's present object to conjure up misfortunes: to play the part she had assigned to him, Lord Fontenoy must be quite himself; and with a determination that everything should accord with her wishes, Lady Almeria retired to rest. This determination for the present had every prospect of being confirmed, when, on the following morning, upon descending to the breakfast-room, she found his lordship sipping his tea with great apparent satisfaction, and no apparent illness whatsoever; indeed very much inclined to laugh at the whole matter. "I shall eat luncheon in future," he said: "that fasting so long never did agree with me."

After breakfast the brother and sister separated. He rode out with his steward; she was left in full possession of the castle, and with ample time to arrange the old furniture, dictate to the old servants, lecture the young ones, arrange her own

dress, and seat herself, with her back slightly turned towards the light, on a yellow damask sofa, her work-frame before her, and the last new publication by her side, for the reception of company! Strange to say, after such preparations, though she did wait two mortal hours, she did not wait in vain. The report of Lord Fontenoy's arrival, accompanied by her ladyship, had speedily been spread around: to pay their early respects was the object of the neighbourhood. About the hour of luncheon a car was seen advancing up the avenue: though no splendid announcement, yet as a first visitor it was welcome; better things might ensue. Lady Almeria had put on her best gown and cap; she now added her best smiles, and drawing up her tall and scraggy figure to its utmost altitude, she advanced the length of the apartment to meet Mrs. and three Miss Murphys, of Murphy Mount. "It never rains but it pours," to use a familiar phrase: Mrs. Murphy was hardly seated, ere Lady Almeria's smiles and honeyed words were again called forth to greet Mrs. Colonel O'Flaherty, of O'Flaherty Court.

Then followed a really flourishing equipage,

containing the portly person of Lady Burke of Burketown, her son, daughter, and niece; all very talkative, smart, and well-conditioned; and with just sufficient good-breeding, as far as the indulgence of their first taste went, to allow Lady Almeria to get through half of a very pathetic speech which she addressed to each of her guests upon the delight she felt at once more visiting the Emerald Isle, &c.

"Lord! madam, I am not at all surprised: Ireland is, after all, the only country to live in. But are we to have no sight at the countess?" looking around.—"Where is her ladyship, pray? Not ill, I hope? We are all on the tiptoe of expectation, and so are the children. Pray, where may she be?"

"In England," answered Lady Almeria, with an emphasis that made all her visitors start.

"Ah, Lady Burke, you are taken in, like us all!" said Mrs. Murphy. "No offence, my lady, but it was the countess we were all wild to have a peep at. An English countess is not a sight we see every day."

"Nor a sight you need wish to see," replied

Lady Almeria, surprised out of all her courteous manners, and in a voice which made her visitors regard each other with astonishment. Lady Almeria felt, however, that she must gain their favour at whatever expense; so, though bursting with rage, she sufficiently commanded herself to add more calmly, "Lady Fontenoy is not partial to long journeys; my brother is excessively attached to this place, and, requiring a female to do the honours of his house, has invited me to take upon myself that office. It is an arduous task," added Lady Almeria affectedly; "but, for his dear sake, I trust that I shall perform with satisfaction the part assigned to me."

"So her ladyship is not coming?" repeated Mrs. O'Flaherty with a dejected air.

"No," answered Lady Almeria, hoping to terminate the discourse.

"Nor the young lord?"

"No:" the answer coming more sharply.

"Well, what a pity!—if the officers did not put off their ball till her arrival!"

"They may wait some time," was the reply, in a still sharper accent, which seemed to cause the

desired effect. A pause ensued. Lady Almeria again composed her features to smiles, and in doing the honours of the luncheon, really performed her task so well as to bring something nearly approaching to such an expression to the countenance of her guests, who, to confess the fact, were all much disappointed at Lady Fontenoy's substitute. Her fame and beauty had long been familiar to their ears: such as went to London, brought back a report of her surpassing grace to such as did not; of which last number were Lady Almeria's guests; and their anxiety to be as wise as their neighbours was only to be surpassed by their present disappointment in not having their anxiety gratified.

With the sumptuous luncheon before her, Lady Almeria's good-humour was quite restored;—her guests eating and admiring, admiring and eating, till they could admire and eat no longer. Then came a general silence, which Lady Almeria, who began to wax weary of smiling and playing the amiable, secretly hoped was the precursor of a general move. Not at all; the pause was broken by Lady Burke, following up a chain of ideas.

"So Lady Fontenoy does not like Ireland? Extreme bad taste in her ladyship, I must say."

"It is a pity she married an Irishman," observed Mrs. Murphy.

"Lord! my dear," said Mrs. Colonel O'Flaherty, "what would have become of these old walls if she had not? I have heard the colonel say, ma'am," turning to Lady Almeria, "that about the time this present lord was born, there was not a room in the house into which the rain did not penetrate: it was the wet winter of 17—: and her ladyship, his mother, poor soul! shifted her room here and there and everywhere about the house; but they were all bad alike, and the walls trembled at every blast. Indeed, at that time they talked of pulling the castle down. It was just at the period Mr. Spinsteam came down from Cork, and talked of building as he has since accomplished; and he waited a whole year with the intention of purchasing the materials of the castle when pulled down. However, the castle neither fell down as was expected, nor was it sold either; but lived till the present lady's fine fortune made all right and tight as we now see."

Lady Almeria was wise enough to return no answer; but her countenance bore sufficient marks of displeasure to induce Mrs. Murphy, who was a good-humoured woman, by way of consolation to say,

"Well, all is as it should be, I am sure, now. Why, I suppose in a whole month they never saw, in the old lord's time, so much meat as is now on the table; and as to wine, I do believe there was not in all the cellars what we have got before us."

"The cellars of the Irish are often empty," said Lady Almeria sarcastically, "but more from hospitality than poverty." Then turning to the young Burke, she asked something of the regiment quartered in the neighbouring town. The youth, happy to talk, entered into their history public and private, in which his sister and cousin eagerly joined — setting him right when he was in error, and the mother revenging her son by contradicting them in return. The house of Burke being thus engaged, that of Fontenoy had a respite; and Lady Almeria had the satisfaction of viewing the departure of her guests with-

out having to record any reccurrence of their offence; which she took especial care to sink the account of, in the description she gave afterwards of the visits to her brother when they were at dinner.

For several days a constant succession of visitors arrived at Castle Fontenoy; and as the non-arrival of the countess was now pretty well circulated throughout the neighbourhood, Lady Almeria had no further distress on the supposition of the visits not being wholly to herself. Occasionally, however, a little remark was made—to which Lady Almeria was wisely deaf—of the loss that it was to the county Lady Fontenoy being absent; and one young lady, with tears in her eyes, announced to her, that the officers did not think it worth their while to give a ball now that the countess would not be there.

"Not worth their while!" thought Lady Almeria; "and I a Delaval, inhabiting this castle as its mistress! I will give a ball myself, and show how we can do without the countess!"

In a very smart equipage, Lady Almeria Delaval returned her visitors' visits. Coward as she

was, her dignity supported her in a most wonderful manner over bad roads and good, down precipices and up steeps, with half-drunk postilions and half-broke horses; and though entering every house pale from affright, and with a voice tremulous from agitation, she yet with that voice spoke in raptures of her drive, of the excellent roads, the beauty of the country, and the delights of exercise and sociability.

The visits well over, her ladyship's nerves restored, and her health and limbs none the worse, it was necessary to arouse Lord Fontenoy into those exertions of civility or hospitality without which his sister's triumph would be incomplete; and in order to pave the way for her object—a *fête*, so splendid that its fame should be blazoned over Ireland, England, and all her dependencies—she resolved that her brother should give, in newspaper language, a series of splendid dinners.

Lord Fontenoy was rather startled at the project. "My dear sister, I thought you disliked society?"

"Not at all, my dear brother, when your interest is concerned."

"Mine!—I am sure that I have no inter-

est to keep up in this county, and I like quiet."

"Pardon me there: as the head of the house of Delaval, you are of far too great importance not to be positively obliged, when residing at the castle of your fathers, to keep up the family interest,—not for any specific purpose, but simply because it is incumbent upon you not to allow that interest to escape, which your ancestors have handed down to you. At Clinton Court the case was different: there you were comparatively nobody; any attentions from you as a Delaval were unrequired, and I must say, from all that I saw of the Somersetshire squires, unrequited. The Danverses were alone of importance in their eyes. Well, thank Heaven! those days are gone; the ignorant, cold-blooded English will be no longer our guests: dear, warm-hearted Irishmen are far better informed as to our claims, and far more easy to please by our manners. Here I may venture to smile and be agreeable; in England I gave up the matter as hopeless."

Lady Almeria's arguments were apparently conclusive, as twenty-five persons, in the course of the

next twenty-four hours, received invitations to dinner at Castle Fontenoy; which dinner over, another twenty-five received theirs; and so on, till Lord Fontenoy, who, like most weak persons, was a creature of habit, becoming accustomed to company, was rather annoyed if he found himself *tête-à-tête* with his sister. Lady Almeria could not have desired a more promising state of things, and, to gratify her brother as well as herself, the house was seldom empty; and the Morning Post had actually a paragraph headed "Festivities at Castle Fontenoy," which Lady Almeria sincerely hoped might reach the eyes of the cruel Arthur St. Clair and the odious Lady Fontenoy.

"They will then see how my value is appreciated; and to be of importance, I need neither their love nor friendship! If old Sir Christopher O'Connor can but be brought to be a little more attentive, perhaps a report may get about that we are likely to be married; and there is no saying whether such a report may not produce the fact. To be sure, he is rarely sober, and very dull; but then he is rich, and might be improved. Some people even thought Arthur St. Clair dull, and

some people talk here of Fontenoy liking wine. I am sure I do not perceive it: he must, of course, exert himself for the entertainment of his guests; and it does his spirits good."

Poor Lady Almeria! as she thus reasoned, and, for such motives, encouraged her brother to receive a constant succession of company, little did she dream that, for the gratification of that company, he was daily receiving "an enemy into his mouth to steal away his brains." Such was, however, the fact; and this insidious enemy, under the guise of friendship, was slowly, though surely, working into the fountain of intellect; a source too weak, as regarded Lord Fontenoy, to bear the slightest attack, covertly or openly.

CHAPTER XXV.

Lord Rosmoor received his niece with the most unfeigned pleasure: the reason of her visit he neither thought of nor cared for; all that he felt was that he himself was benefited, and beyond that circumstance he was perfectly indifferent.

Selfish as was her uncle's affection, still it was affection; and smarting as were Clara's tender feelings under the want of it in her husband, she did not dive deeply into its cause, but was satisfied with the effect; she therefore returned her uncle's embrace with the utmost cordiality, and took possession of the apartments assigned to her—not quite with the desire he expressed that she might never relinquish them again, but with a very satisfied countenance.

To part from Lord Fontenoy was not in the

least Clara's intention; sooner or later he would be wearied to death by Lady Almeria, she felt assured; and then he would leave Ireland, and, too happy at being reconciled to his wife, would join her and his child at Clinton Court. As to Lady Almeria, Clara's mind was decided: she must in future have a home of her own; any number of hundreds she might require to form her separate establishment would be cheaply sacrificed for such an end. Lord and Lady Fontenoy had not parted in wrath, and she had voluntarily promised to write word of her safe arrival, and that of her son Delaval, at Rosmoor Hall. She had performed her promise, but she was not prepared for an acknowledgment of her letter by the stiff pen of Lady Almeria, in her most approved manner of dry periods and frozen sentences! Great was Lady Fontenoy's surprise, and rather more than surprise—disappointment not unmixed with anger—at the extreme folly of her lord in allowing their communications to pass through his sister's hands. In return, she addressed him a calm but forcible reply, — her small spirit was aroused, and after a short anim-

adversion upon the impropriety as well as unkindness of his conduct, she added,

" If you do not choose to direct your letters to me, let them be addressed to your son: I will be his amanuensis, and reply, not from myself, but from him:—do anything rather than employ the pen and sentiments of one whom it has been my misfortune to have ever known; whose feelings, affections, and even principles, I have no dependance upon; and with whom, whilst I exist, I will have as little communication as possible."

Lady Fontenoy's letter was despatched, received, read, and deposited in his lordship's ecritoire. In vain did she wait—and most anxiously wait,—but no answer was returned! Lady Almeria's grand object was, however, answered. " The festivities at Castle Fontenoy" were read by Lady Fontenoy, and by that means she learnt that her lord, though silent, was well. They aroused, however, no jealous feelings in her bosom; all that she felt was surprise that Lady Almeria should care about such display, more particularly as it must have cost her no little trouble to stimulate Lord Fontenoy's apathy and indolence to the exertion.

"From this example of early obedience, I ought to profit in the education of my boy. Habit has rendered Lord Fontenoy docile as a spaniel. His sister bids him be jealous — he is so. She orders him to Ireland — he goes. She bids him be gay —he is; to dance, and he flies in the air! I wonder whether I shall ever work such prodigies in Delaval, — or anything approaching thereunto!"

As thus thought Lady Fontenoy, little did she dream of what was passing in her husband's mind! Had she known this, not even his neglect, his *fêtes*, Lady Almeria, or anything else, should have prevented her flying to him: but she could not surmise, nor could even Lady Almeria, that Lord Fontenoy was daily implanting the seeds of destruction to his constitution in a shape the most potent as well as pernicious. Dulness, though a strong word, was yet so completely identified with Lord Fontenoy's character, that no one ever expected him to be otherwise. All that was looked for from him, by his acquaintance, was to be handsome and silent, — expectations that were more decidedly

answered than is commonly the case where hope is in any shape concerned.

Perfectly satisfied that he must be very happy because she herself thought herself so,—that his good looks were the admiration of all around, old and young, and her affability the theme of every discourse, Lady Almeria pursued her own ends, totally regardless that her brother's silence was becoming stupefaction — his dulness, imbecility, — his easy temper, indifference; and that the secret of her power lay in his enervated mind and failing health.

"One more *fête*, and then we will have a respite," said Lady Almeria to her brother.

"Only one," said Lord Fontenoy: "I do not like hot rooms."

"Well, we will manage this better than the last. I intend to turn the conservatory into a card-room!"

"Dinners I do not mind; but the balls are very wearisome," continued her brother.

"I am quite of your opinion; but civility requires something more general than dinners: one must banish exclusiveness in order to be popular.

This ball will be the last. Sir Christopher tells me that the *fête* of the 17th was so admired that the whole province will be in arms if we have not a repetition of it."

"Well, well! as you like," said Lord Fontenoy: "my head aches terribly."

"A ride may do you good," replied his sister absently. "I wonder where we could get an apparatus for making ice: Jones tells me there is not a bit left in the ice-house; and lemons, too, are very scarce; whilst not an orange is to be had."

When Lady Almeria retired to the housekeeper to consult with her how these distresses could best be remedied, Lord Fontenoy moved slowly towards the stables, mounted languidly his horse, rode forth, and, two hours afterwards, was found extended senseless upon the road! He was carried to a neighbouring house, a surgeon summoned, and Lady Almeria apprised of the sad state her brother was in.

It need not be said that she was most exceedingly shocked at the tidings. When, however, she reached the house where he lay, the surgeon, who had bled

him, pronounced tolerably well of his case, and considered that his ultimate recovery was not entirely hopeless ; it was possible, perhaps more than possible—probable. Lady Almeria's grief was always loud, and often mixed up with ill-humour ; her sorrow, therefore, took the turn of anger, and was chiefly directed against the unfortunate horse her brother had rode,—the very identical Fanny, the original cause of all her disappointments by running away with her in Clinton Chase.

" That horrid horse !" she exclaimed ; " I knew she would do Fontenoy mischief some day. Fontenoy shall never ride it again."

" The horse may be an indifferent beast," replied the doctor, who overheard her ejaculations, " but in the present instance is blameless."

" Blameless !—how so, sir, — when Lord Fontenoy, whom you have now pronounced to be hardly out of danger, might decidedly have been killed, and may be so another time ?"

" Most true, my lady ; but the horse neither stumbled nor started ; nor is his lordship materially bruised ;—the ailment is internal, and not external."

"An inward bruise!" screamed Lady Almeria in a voice of alarm; "I trust not."

"No, madam, no bruise, but an obstruction in the flow of nervous influence from the brain into the organs of motion—an increase of the action of the sanguiferous system towards the regions of sense: you understand? Pray, my lady, is there any tendency in your ladyship's family to apoplexy?"

"To apoplexy!" cried Lady Almeria with an offended air. "No, sir,—the Delavals have the strongest constitutions of any family in existence;—the purity of their blood is not more pure than their descent: they never are ill. Lord Fontenoy never had a day's illness in his life; nor had I myself. Such accidents as this, sir, will happen;—a fall from a horse no constitution can prevent."

"Certainly not, my lady;—but the very strength of his lordship's frame I suspect to be the cause of this accident; and this attack, I understand, is the second of the kind——"

"Sir, you are extremely mistaken," interrupted Lady Almeria sharply, who had every determina-

tion to believe her brother in no danger; first, for the sake of her affection towards him; secondly, for her own sake; for if he fell ill, her reign must cease,—and if he died, her only tie, object, and interest in life was removed.

"A fainting fit, in consequence of fasting a long time, his lordship certainly had the evening of our arrival at Castle Fontenoy."

"His lordship's spirits have been lately somewhat low, his valet informs me."

"His valet is very impertinent to hazard such an opinion. I advise you, sir, to judge for yourself, and not to listen to the gossip of the servants." And Lady Almeria abruptly concluded the discourse.

The following day Lord Fontenoy was removed to the castle; and to do Lady Almeria justice, though professing her utter disbelief of the doctor's opinion of apoplexy, she was as careful of her brother as if firmly persuaded thereof. She nursed him with the most assiduous attention—most particularly careful when he seemed inclined to sleep, to indulge too much his appetite, to wander in his discourse, or be low in his spirits. Not-

withstanding her watchfulness, Lord Fontenoy had taken a very independent step. He had ventured to express to his doctor (rather a singular confidant) the regrets he felt at his separation from his wife. The doctor, who was perfectly ignorant of such being the case, saw directly the whole affair. His mind was decided, and he inquired if his patient would like her ladyship to be sent for.

"She will not come," sighed Lord Fontenoy: "she does not like Ireland, or Almeria, or myself."

"Well," said the doctor, half smiling, "that is a melancholy case, truly. But where may she be?"

"With her uncle, Lord Rosmoor."

"In London?"

"No, in Devonshire — Rosmoor Hall — I forget the post-town: I should have answered her last letter had I remembered it."

Without, however, waiting for any additional address, the doctor ventured to pen the following letter to Lady Fontenoy that very evening.

" Madam,

" I feel myself obliged to address your ladyship on the present invalid state of the Earl of Fontenoy. I conclude your ladyship to be aware of the illness, though not of its cause, which, I grieve to say, is a most decided case of apoplexy: indeed, I give it the mildest term, for I know not whether there be not a tendency to paralysis accompanying it. Apoplexy does not usually affect the brain, as, I am sorry to say, his lordship's is affected; nor weaken the frame, as, I am also sorry to say, his lordship's is weakened.

" I do not fear that he is in any immediate danger; but I cannot pronounce that he is decidedly not so. Of one thing I must inform your ladyship — tranquillity of mind is more essentially necessary than medicine; and his lordship is extremely desirous to see your ladyship and Lord Delaval.

" With many apologies for thus intruding,

" I have the honour, &c. &c.

" J. More."

" P. S. I presume it to be unnecessary to add, that the sooner the invalid's wishes are gratified by the arrival of your ladyship, the better will it be for his lordship."

It would be vain to describe poor Clara's feelings when this letter was brought to her. Never in her heart had she blamed Lord Fontenoy; his faults were the faults of his sister, and on her had fallen every particle of angry feeling their divisions had gendered. Now, however, she was equally willing to blame herself; and as she made her hasty preparations for proceeding to Ireland, often would her conscience smite her for not having accompanied her lord thither originally; it was self-willed, unkind, unfeeling in her, knowing, as she did, the weakness of his disposition, to leave him so entirely to the guidance of such as Lady Almeria.

Of course, the physician's letter was communicated to Lord Rosmoor, who grieved sadly over the contents, as depriving him of his niece's company, but secretly hoping that before she could well

depart, some better account should arrive and make her waver in the resolution of going to Ireland, or else so bad a one as to render such a journey useless. This hope was, however, vain; Lady Fontenoy waited not the arrival of a second post: and, indeed, had she required any additional stimulus for activity in her preparations, the following letter which her maid imparted to her ladyship made her still more anxious to depart; for, absurdly as it was worded, it threw more light upon the proceedings at Castle Fontenoy than the letter of Doctor More, and bore precisely the same date.

"Dear Mrs. Green,

"I beg pardon for not having performed my promise of letting you know of our safe arrival here sooner, where we have been two months all but five days. We had a sad wearisome journey of it, and a terrible voyage; but, thank goodness! we got here safe: for the sea is tremendous rough, and I was mortally afraid about my stores—though we all got here safe, excepting a china tea-cup broke, and three pots of strawberry jam which the salt-water got at. So we were none the worse

at that time at least; though I cannot say as much for the present state of things, as you will see all in good time. A strange old place this —but you wo'nt hardly believe me when I tell you that Clinton Court is as dull again as Castle Fontenoy.

"We thought the wild Irishers would not be speakable, if a creature did fall in one's way: but that is not at all the case. There 's a town close by here; none of the cleanest in the universe, I must say; but still some very genteel people live there, and I hardly ever think we have been without company from it. Mrs. Stealstill the exciseman's lady, and himself occasionally; Mrs. Aloes the druggist's lady, and young Mr. Dusty, the son of Lord F—'s steward's steward—quite a gentleman—are very obliging in that way, and when I have leisure I generally step down to them for a bit of chat. But, however, of leisure till just now I have had very little; for such doings as we have had here! they would make your hair stand an end! To think of the fuss a dinner at Clinton used to put his lordship in!—often have I heard him say, 'What a bore to have these people!' Now

he goes out of his way, I declare, to get company. And then, when her ladyship's guests came from London, my lady all glee and smiles with her friends,—my lord he was used to be tired of them in no time, and always fishing to find out how long they were going to stay. But such a change here!—he seems never satisfied without a houseful: the beds always occupied; such feasting and drinking in the servants' hall as well as in the parlour! And for myself, never a quiet moment till just now.

"As to Lady Almeria, she takes, I must say, very kindly to his lordship's new tastes; which she must do all to please him, as Mrs. Miller tells me she hates company and wearing her best clothes. Now they are never off her back, doing the honours to such lots of gentlefolks who come here with grooms and ladies' maids without end. She opened a grand ball his lordship gave the other day — her dress a spangled tissue — with a gentleman who, to be sure, I believe was a little flustered by drink, — but still he was so insidious that Mrs. Miller was sure a marriage would come of it; — but, alas! that is all at an end, and we

are much more likely to have a very different ceremony now. But, not to participitate matters, as the book-writers say, all this feasting and merry-making I thought would come to no good; and so it proved. His lordship began to look horridly ill in all our eyes but Lady Almeria's; and, if truth must be told, hardly ever went to bed sober; and every morning so poorly, he could not leave his room without a glass of spirits, as I was creditably informed by my lord's valet, Mr. Lilly. This was all bad enough, but it is now as bad as possible: he has had a fall from his horse, my Lady Almeria says; but in truth he has had a fit, the doctor says; and if he has another, the doctor thinks he will be as dead as a door-nail.

"Such a change now in the house!—no noise, no company; and his lordship living on bread and water in a dark room; and Lady Almeria fidgeting about the house, looking like a ghost, snapping at the servants, and quarrelling with the doctor when he talks of danger; and just like one wild when he spoke of her ladyship being sent for. But, however, whatever she may think, I think it is my duty to the dowager that will be

(if the earl dies), and the young heir as is, to pronounce the truth; so I hope, Mrs. Green, you will do her ladyship and me the pleasure to tell what I have told you. This illness has quite worried my nerves. I am quite sick of Ireland, and wish we were all back again at Clinton Court; which, for my part, I believe his lordship does too—most particularly if her ladyship would meet him there, and make up matters.

"Mrs. Miller desires her remembrance. She has become very fine since she has been here; indeed every one has taken up a new nature, except your humble servant: and as Lady Almeria gives away ten gowns to where she used to give away one, she can afford to be smart; and when his lordship commanded the play at Ballywhim, she went in a cast-off black hat and scarlet plume (that as her mistress used to wear so often last winter at Clinton Court). But such airs will not answer, I can tell her; for Mr. Lilly wants a steady wife, and not a dressy one; and though he did sit by her at the play, it was only to get a good place in front for himself, not for her company, for the matter of that, as I well know.

"Now, my dear, adieu! I trust we shall soon

meet, for I write this letter purposely to bring her ladyship; for, between us, I must say the doctor gave me a hint he should write, whether I did or no, and as I thought a stranger like might frighten her ladyship, I write this myself.

"Your friend to command,

"M. Jones."

Like all persons of true sensibility and real good feeling, Lady Fontenoy was never backward in taking upon herself full measure of any offence which in reason could be laid to her charge. Her conscience hardly ever slept, and was far more ready to magnify than extenuate her faults—far more ready to bear a double burden, than that a hair's-breadth more than its due should be laid on the shoulders of others. Bitter, therefore, were her feelings as she journeyed to Ireland; reflecting, that whilst she had deemed herself the injured, she might possibly have been the offender. Had she done all she ought to reassure her husband upon the subject of Arthur St. Clair? Well had she observed that Lord Fontenoy's object had been to draw from her some angry observa-

tion as regarded that young man's unfortunate passion. Too honest to express what she did not feel, she had resolutely resisted his evident desire. Had she acted right by her husband in so doing? Also, had she accompanied him to Ireland, the low habit which he possibly had early in life there imbibed would never have been revived, at least to such an extent. Unhappy herself, she had not given credit to Lord Fontenoy's feelings; to which feelings of the mind were added those of the body. Sickness is a powerful aid in any cause where the sensibilities are to be aroused; and Lady Fontenoy, as she thought over the letters relating to her lord, was worked up into scarcely more kindness to herself than Lady Almeria could have felt, and arrived at Castle Fontenoy as humbled and penitent as though really Lord Fontenoy's illness were mental, Lady Almeria's hopes actually destroyed by her insidious machinations, and Arthur St. Clair's love caused by her sole encouragement.

But if Lady Fontenoy was miserable, what were Lady Almeria's feelings? It would have been well for her peace could her conscience have been stifled, or that to its first acute

heart-rending pang annihilation could have speedily succeeded. Vain, bigoted, obstinate as she was, Lady Almeria, when once she allowed herself to acknowledge her brother's critical state, was forced to take into her consideration the cause and origin of his danger. Then indeed was self-accusation busy. Was it not she herself who had planted the dagger in his heart; removed him from his home, where he was respected and well in health, to the society of those amongst whom his constitution was speedily undermined; whilst his wife, who could not have been deceived, though his sister might be, was, through her means, far away? And all to answer her own selfish ends,—to revenge herself upon a woman whom she hated and envied,—upon a man who had been indifferent to her preference, and for the sake of exalting herself into a personage of importance, when the fatigues which distinction entails were uncongenial to her habits, and unsatisfactory because absurdly purchased at the expense of those pleasures bestowed by mediocrity, and which she was accustomed to, whether to her natural taste or not. If her brother were to die,—and his situa-

tion seemed each day more precarious,—he would die upbraiding her with cruelty in dragging him to Ireland, and heaping blessings on his wife and child. And, (Lady Almeria's vivid imagination, once in train, could embrace the whole of the picture,) as if the present and the past were not sufficient for her wretchedness, she would dart her look beyond even her brother's cold tomb, and dare to fill the measure of the dismal prospect by imagining the bridal wreath to usurp that of the cypress—the widow's dress thrown by—and Arthur St. Clair at Clinton, where once her brother reigned — and his wretched sister hopelessly sighed—the lord of all, loving and beloved! And all this her own work! The brother she loved dead by her hand, in order to ensure the felicity of the two people whom her soul most abhorred!

Very different were Lady Fontenoy's thoughts from those of her sister. By the bedside of her suffering husband, soothing his distresses, arranging everything for his comfort, and hearing hourly from his lips that he had never known a moment's happiness when parted from her, and that she had never been absent from his mind, she was sufficiently

occupied; most particularly as by her unceasing devotion she hoped to remove every unpleasing feeling of jealousy, and to repair every wrong she had done by petulantly remaining in England when he wished her to accompany him to Ireland.

Since Clara's arrival at Castle Fontenoy, Lady Almeria had never appeared; the sound of her carriage wheels had driven her from her brother's room—where, to do her justice, when convinced of his danger, she had been unremitting in her attendance—to her own apartment, giving strict orders for no one to approach her but her maid. To Lady Fontenoy's civil request to be admitted, she returned a decided negative: the request was not repeated. In the solitude of her own apartment, hardly eating, sleeping, or speaking, Lady Almeria was an object to awaken pity in the most hardened. Care-worn, haggard, restless, she paced the live-long day, and often night, her chamber floor.

With breathless anxiety she listened to the constant reports of her brother's state of health; and as they were worded, her hopes or fears predominated. At length he was pronounced

out of danger; Doctor More himself gave her the intelligence: and though Lady Fontenoy was acknowledged by her attention to be the author of so favourable a state of things, yet, for once, envy slept in Lady Almeria's bosom, and she gave way alone to the unfeignedly grateful pleasure such news afforded her. Tears, heartfelt tears, fell from sources dried up by anxiety, and the relief they afforded to her overcharged heart and burning brain convinced her that her causes of thanksgiving were twofold: not bodily ailment alone would have been her lot had her brother died, nor even death as a relief, but insanity! This direful calamity was for the present averted; and every increasing day improving the reports of her brother's health, Lady Almeria's mind was tranquillised. In her affections disappointed, with her ambition annihilated, still, her conscience at rest as to being instrumental to her brother's death, she felt a contentment greater than had ever been her wont, and almost verging on happiness.

As soon as he could move, Lord Fontenoy was ordered to Dublin by Doctor More, for change of

air, and superior medical advice, should the latter be required. There was, however, no necessity for Lady Almeria to be included in this arrangement; and as the principal part of the establishment would remain at Castle Fontenoy, her dignity was sufficiently supported, and possibly gratified, by being sole mistress. By a sort of tacit agreement, Lady Almeria only visited her brother's room at such periods as were devoted by Lady Fontenoy to her daily exercise; and at one of these interviews Lord Fontenoy in an affectionate manner informed her of the plan arranged, to which Lady Almeria could not do otherwise than acquiesce. To Lady Fontenoy's great relief, beyond this daily visit Lady Almeria lived as much secluded in her own apartment as on her first arrival at Castle Fontenoy.

To Dublin Lord and Lady Fontenoy repaired; and in some measure he might be considered as well. Though weak in body, and at times rather wandering in mind, yet he so rapidly improved, that there hardly seemed a doubt as to his being shortly quite himself again. Clara felt quite satisfied he would be so, and, with all her

early affection awakened by his danger, and the gratitude with which he ever expressed himself for her attentions, she anticipated a renewal of the halcyon days of her early matrimonial career. If she ever thought of Arthur St. Clair, it was only to reflect upon his passion for herself as one likely to yield to the effects of time: and when that fortunate period should arrive, his society might again be enjoyed, without any Lady Almeria to annoy her by her hatred or him by her affection.

With regard to Lady Almeria, Clara was determined that the same house should never hold them both again. With a suitable income, she might reside at Castle Fontenoy, or where else she liked; but never, never more would she allow her lord's weakness, and her own equanimity, to be put to such severe trial as they had been by her envious disposition and odious temper.

CONCLUSION.

Contrary to Miss St. Clair's prognostics — contrary to the selfish alarms of Lord St. Clair, and the fraternal anxiety of Arthur, Edward and Ellen, with their child, anchored safely in Plymouth harbour exactly eight months from the day of their departure from England; although the Admiralty had not thought it necessary to comply with Lord St. Clair's wishes, by sending a special vessel to restore that nephew and daughter to their native land whom he himself had banished thence.

It is unnecessary to enter into the particulars of the meeting between Lord and Lady St. Clair and their daughter; it may be imagined, or all that has been written of their character has been written in vain. The most striking feature of the whole scene was the very general oblivion to which the past was consigned; an oblivion which was no sacrifice to policy or politeness, but,

though from very different sources, the genuine feelings of their minds. Neither Lord nor Lady St. Clair ever considered aught but the present moment: Ernest's death, Ellen's disobedience, and Edward's disgrace, were appointed to be forgotten — and they were forgotten. As to Ellen, her heart was as incapable of harbouring the recollection of wrongs, as of banishing from its pure sanctuary the remembrance of benefits. In beholding her parents' present smiles, their frowns were obliterated; and in extolling their kindness and tenderness of reception, the pretty house in Park Lane prepared for their arrival, the handsome equipage and beautiful horses, with the liberal allowance to support the whole, the tardiness of the bounty, and its unquestionably selfish origin, never for a moment crossed her mind.

Ellen's was perhaps one of the most happily constituted dispositions that ever found its way into an earthly tenement. She could contrive to efface from her mind every vestige of her parents' neglect—not to give it, perhaps, the more appropriate term of unkindness; and at the same time, to her credit be it spoken, in this happy sacrifice

to duty and charity, the claims of gratitude were not, as is too often the case, encroached upon. Mixed up as they were with the deeds of harshness on the part of others, the deeds of kindness and generosity of Sir William Crawford and Lord Marston were ever fondly cherished in the warmest recesses of her benevolent feelings.

That Edward did not quite share his wife's feelings, requires no severity of comment, particularly as he did full justice to the merit of hers. For Ellen's sake, as well as his own, he was very glad to be received again into favour, —to be not only out of debt, but also rich and independent. His eyes, however, had been too well opened as to the character of his relatives, to be ever again deceived on that score: no subsequent change in their conduct could make him alter his opinion of their behaviour towards himself and wife,—a behaviour which had taught him a salutary, and, after all, not very severe lesson, which he turned to good account in his more prosperous days; and if any of the leaven of selfishness had place in his heart, (which, as a St. Clair, his aunt would have said

was not impossible,) it was driven from that hold by the consideration of the baneful deformity of aspect which the hand of adversity unveiled to his view,—a hand equally displaying the reverse of the picture in simplicity, high-mindedness, and generosity. With these contrasts thus placed before him, his choice was unhesitatingly made ; and if in future days Edward did honour to his country and name, something must be attributed to that knowledge of human nature which he had acquired with adversity as an instructor.

But it is full time to return to Lady Fontenoy. We left her attending her convalescent husband to Dublin. Of what remains to be told of her history few words will suffice, but those few are important.

Shortly after the return of the St. Clairs to England, the newspapers announced the death of Lord Fontenoy at Aix, where his physicians had ordered him for his health. Though sudden, his death could hardly be termed unexpected, as, from the nature of the disorder, a relapse might be fatal. The hope that Lady Fontenoy entertained, and the physicians were not backward to confirm, was that a relapse in one so young as Lord

Fontenoy might be easily averted, and his life prolonged for many years. Whether Lady Fontenoy's grief was profound, it matters not to inquire. She felt sufficiently, from whatever cause arising, to be totally indifferent to society and the world; and in one of the most retired valleys of Switzerland she sought repose for a wounded spirit and dejected heart!

That she did not remain for life in this deep seclusion may be presumed; and that, her term of mourning over, the world should resume its influence and demand its rights, can be easily conjectured. But when and how that power first demonstrated itself, or how far, during her Swiss seclusion, the solace of letters was indulged in, it is needless to say. However, it was towards Italy, and not to England, that Lady Fontenoy journeyed on abandoning her peaceful vale.

By a singular coincidence, about the same period that Lady Fontenoy once more bent her steps to the South, Arthur St. Clair suddenly discovered that time hung sadly heavy upon his hands now that Melcombe was rendered habitable and beautiful; and that, what with the demands

Lord and Lady St. Clair made upon the time of his brother and Ellen, and the various claims which wealth and importance, with a young family, entailed upon their possessors, he could rarely enjoy their society for an instant. Then followed the idea of how much less he knew of Italy than he desired: during his former residence there he had not seen the half of what he ought to have done; nor, for his present enjoyment, had he pillaged the half of her treasures which he required for Melcombe.

Return, therefore, he must; and in the execution of this resolve he tarried not long. In five weeks therefrom, Arthur St. Clair found himself once more at the door of Serny's hotel in the Piazza di Spagna; and leaving his servants to arrange his apartments, he quickly sallied forth, bending his steps to the cemetery heretofore mentioned, where reposed the mortal remains of Sir Charles Maxwell, to whose memory, ere he left Rome, St. Clair had ordered a monument to be erected.

The last golden rays of a declining sun fell sadly on the various memorials of affection or ostentation contained in that hallowed ground. Slow and noiseless was Arthur's step as, with

that feeling of awe which ever attends the treading on the sod where repose the dead, he passed onwards to where, fresh from the sculptor's hands, arose a simple but classical monument of Carara marble. One glance told Arthur that the silence which reigned around him was not from solitude alone: over that very tomb he came to visit was inclined a female form, her eyes intent on deciphering the inscription that grateful friendship had caused to be engraved. With a soft sigh she concluded its perusal; and, throwing aside the veil which had partly shadowed her features, and turning her dark full eyes around, she met those of Arthur St. Clair: that female was Lady Fontenoy!

Before we conclude this humble tale, some few words must be devoted to Lady Almeria Delaval.

Previously to leaving England, Lord Fontenoy, with the assistance of his wife, made a settlement upon his sister which secured to her a considerable income for the remainder of her days. Poor,

therefore, she was no longer; but, alas! in no other respect was she changed. In essentials Lady Almeria was still the same, — rancorous, envious, and ill-tempered! The downfall of her hopeful Irish scheme, and with it her temporary importance, had subdued, but not calmed, her spirit; and the solitariness of her position, throwing her upon her own self for the indulgence of her humours, did not add to her happiness. With all her self-love, Lady Almeria was not blinded to her own madness, in having proclaimed Arthur St. Clair's passion to her brother as being the original cause of all her misfortunes. Till that act of folly, the opportunities of their meeting still existed, and, consequently, her chance of success could not be considered as over; and Time, that enemy or friend as one's wishes dictate, might have worked wonders in her favour, by proving at length to his understanding, what her modesty could not expect from his eyes, — her decided superiority to the rest of the world.

As, wretched and forlorn, Lady Almeria thus reasoned, the sad tidings came of her brother's death. Then indeed was her grief unfeigned;

and though now no longer inclined to lay to her own charge the cause, yet she was perhaps even more wretched than at Castle Fontenoy, when, with the barbed arrow of remorse still rankling in her bosom, death seemed to promise speedy deliverance from all her woes! As it was, she lived. Days, months, even years, passed over her head in misery which was yet to have an increase: her cup of grief was not yet full; miserable as she was, despair awaited her.

To exist unloved, without friend or interest in the world, her family affections buried in the early tomb of her brother, was sorrow sufficient; but, great as it was, it was still surpassed when the tidings reached her that his widow was united to another,—and that other one whom she had often tried to hate, abuse, and even, in the bitterness of her heart, to ridicule,—yet still loved! The deep-rooted envy which Clara had ever raised in the soured mind of Lady Almeria as the wife of Lord Fontenoy, could only be surpassed by that she was doomed to endure when she reflected upon her as the cherished bride of Arthur St. Clair!

With regard to other personages in this history,

Miss Fitz-Norman, to the infinite delight of the friends and relations of both parties, gave her hand to Lord Marston.

At the earnest entreaties of her nephews, Miss St. Clair quitted Scotland and has taken up her abode at Melcombe; Arthur and Clara residing at Clinton Court, where Miss St. Clair makes occasional visits, and far more rarely to St. Clair Abbey. Her greatest delight, however, is to receive beneath her roof the two brothers Edward and Arthur, their wives and children. At such times she might be deemed almost too happy, if the neighbourhood of the Chartley gossips did not keep alive a source of wholesome irritation, without which, it is the firm belief of Miss St. Clair's friends, the peculiarities of her constitution might materially suffer.

Lady Conway still continues the finest and handsomest lady in London. She and Ellen are the best friends possible. With Lady Fontenoy the case is somewhat different, — and the two countesses never appear to so little advantage as

in each other's society—a fact which could not escape the discerning eyes of the judicious Duke of Ashford; and he therefore makes it a rule, though it would be the ruin of Ashford House not to include them both in all his *evening* parties, yet never to invite them to *dinner* on the same day.

HOME.

L' onda dal mar divisa
Bagna la valle, il monte ;
Va passaggiera
In fiume ;
Va prigioniera
In fonte :
Mormora sempre, e geme
Fin che non torna al mar.
Al mar dov' ella nacque
Dove acquistò gli umori,
Dove da i lunghi errori
Spera di riposar.

METASTASIO.

HOME.

CHAPTER I.

Two classes of travellers decidedly exist,—the profitable and the unprofitable. Mind, reader, our meaning is mental, not mercantile. The first class observe, consider, understand, and remember; the last consider and observe little, understand still less, and are totally ignorant of those pleasures which Mr. Rogers has poetised.

Besides these two, a third class may be also added. We allude to those called fire-side travellers; and it is chiefly to them and the first-named that we address ourselves — begging, the one from their books, the other from their personal observa-

tions, to imagine as wild a scene as can well be described. Woods of gigantic pines, overhanging the sides of fearful precipices, which themselves appeared ready to topple from their heights into the roaring torrent over which they cast a dark and almost impenetrable shade: such a scene we would have our reader *imagine;*

> ——"For Nature here
> Wanton'd as in her prime, and play'd at will
> Her virgin fancies,"——

and the only evidence that any other power had intruded itself therein, rested in a narrow and almost imperceptible path, winding down the side of a fearful mountain, visible at intervals, and then again obscured behind projecting rocks and dark firs, till at length it reached a spot where the bed of the torrent being confined within very narrow limits by the adjacent rocks, a rude bridge had been thrown across, formed by two solid pines rudely lashed together, so as to secure a tolerably safe passage to the mountaineer in search of his flocks or game, or to any chance passenger whom accident caused to journey that way.

It was down this path, and approaching the

bridge, that two human figures appeared; the one, fair, handsome, and tall, carrying himself with dignity, though not with agility, considering the evident necessity for exertion required by the mode of travelling; the other, dark, short, and less gracefully formed, but with a lively countenance, and evidently as far superior to his companion in walking powers, as he was inferior in air and general demeanour. Their dress was somewhat similar, and corresponded to that of three-fourths of the thousands of travellers in search of pleasure or profit at that moment migrating about Europe; which dress the reader may imagine according to the fashion of the year he chooses to conceive these travellers to have journeyed. They both carried on a stick across their shoulders small bundles of apparel or provisions; and the shorter traveller had, in addition, an apparently well-filled portfolio.

"My dear fellow," said the taller traveller, suddenly making a halt, "if we proceed at this rate we shall miss half the beauties of the scene. I pray ye stay your steps; or in trying to keep pace with them, I shall inevitably roll down into that

noisy caldron below, which bubbles and foams,

'Wie wenn Wasser mit Feuer sich mengst.'

It is paying but a bad compliment to your patron saint, Nature, to pass through her finest works so unmindfully."

"As you please, Albert; but I assure you I do not walk in the least fast: our road is, besides, entirely a descent, and I note everything around with the utmost attention. You must remember, too, that we intend to reach Inspruck to-night."

"We have the whole day before us, Brown,—the sun has not been up two hours."

"Certainly so; but I am not going to quit this fair scene without committing to paper some of its beauties, for the benefit of those into whose heads it never entered to leave the beaten track of horses and carriages, and take that of goats and wolves. When I get a good view of that charming torrent, I shall propose to rest for an hour or two, though we reach not Inspruck till nightfall. So pray, pray Albert, quicken your steps. On that ledge of rock beneath those dark pines we will repose and draw—feasting our bodies with cold provisions, and our eyes with the warm landscape."

Albert made no reply, but, without relaxing in the least from the stateliness of his air, advanced, at the instigation of his friend, with a quicker step; so that very shortly they reached the spot marked out by Brown for their morning refection. The food was quickly displayed, and as quickly attacked by the more mercurial Brown. Albert took more time to arrange his position; the scene around him called forth something of the romance of his nature, and ere he began to eat, he could not help murmuring the first stanza of a beautiful native air, which a bright-eyed peasant girl had sung to them the evening before, in a scene as lovely as that which now lay beneath their feet.

There is nothing mysterious in the two travellers, and their history is simply this:—

The taller stranger was an Englishman of rank and fortune: he travelled for amusement and instruction; and was often wont, as in the present instance, to abandon his carriage, fitted up with all the ostentatious luxuries common to English tourists, and in almost pathless woods seek independence and nature, at the expense of consequence, luxury, and refinement.

The shorter and least well-looking traveller was named Brown. He had been intended for the church, but fortune had not smiled on his prospects. Illness obliged him to leave his college without taking his degree; and he was consequently driven, perhaps as much from taste as necessity, to seek his bread as an artist. He had been friends with Albert at Oxford: difference of station and fortune only appeared to cement their friendship and affection; and for the pleasure of his society, as well as to give him an opportunity of studying Nature in her noblest scenes, Albert invited Brown to accompany him abroad. The union proved more fortunate than that, under somewhat similar circumstances, of the poor, sensitive, and truly poetical Gray, with his rich, witty, and vain patron Walpole;—the want of birth, wealth, and consequence, gnawing the vitals of the one; the possession of them giving to the other a comfortable source of security whence to draw upon for happiness. Poor Gray! from his mind never seemed absent,

"Com' è di sale il pane altrui!"

Happily, however, such was not the case with

Brown; and as he quaffed his full share of the generous Rhenish wine which Albert's travelling-case produced, no feeling that it was not purchased by himself embittered the draught: on the contrary, his nature was such, that the refreshment acquired an additional zest, coming as it did from the hand of friendship.

The laugh and the song ensued. Brown had violent spirits; conversation, beautiful scenery, and even a cheerful meal, would rouse him up to a pitch of wild delight. Not so Albert: he certainly smiled at the gay sallies of his friend, yet, in truth, excitement in him rather led to pensiveness; and it was in some measure a relief to his mind when Brown, springing up, seized his portfolio, and hastily arranging his drawing materials, exclaimed to Albert,

"Now, pray, my good friend, go to sleep, or take a book, or wander down to that pretty pine bridge: do any thing rather than encourage me to consume my precious time in senseless talk."

Albert smilingly acquiesced, and sauntered down towards the pine-tree bridge.

The engrossing nature of Brown's occupation

made him unmindful of time, as he saw each varying light produce fresh beauties in a scene which might have afforded a month's employment to the most eager in the sketch-book cause. He drew on, till suddenly aroused to some consideration of the passing day by the disappearance, behind a forked mountain-top, of that great luminary which had given warmth and brightness to the whole scene. The instantaneous blending of the lights and shadows made the advance of evening in one moment observable; and for that day, at least as far as regarded the deep valley in which he was, his occupation was gone, and the whole face of nature changed.

But where was Albert? Brown arose and gazed anxiously around, but he appeared not. He called; no answer. It may have been womanly fears, but it must be confessed that poor Brown shuddered as he looked at the rolling torrent, roaring and foaming beneath the precarious, and, in all probability, slippery pine-tree bridge: even of wolves he did not disdain to meditate, or of the minor and more natural evil, a mistaken track.

Hastily putting together his drawing materials,

he bounded down to the bridge. "Albert! Albert! where are you?" he exclaimed. But the sullen roar of the torrent was the only reply.

"Good God! what can have become of him?" said Brown, whose heart was as warm as his spirits were light; and his imagination, which, it must be confessed, often assisted his pleasures, now seemed as willing to augment his fears. "If I leave this spot, he may return and miss me. How could I be so thoughtless as not to observe his lengthened absence, or the way he went! What shall I do? Not a creature have I seen all day; therefore, to gain any information regarding him is hopeless!"

As Brown thought and spoke, his restless steps moved onwards till he gained a sharp angular turn round the point of a projecting rock; which having scrambled past with some difficulty, a perfectly new face of country presented itself, and he found as lovely and as tranquil a scene stretched before his eyes as ever painter could portray. The torrent so frequently mentioned was fed by one of those beautiful lakes which abound in the Alps, and which, contented with the noise and uproar its

offspring was making in the world, rested, except when disturbed by occasional intestine troubles, in a general state of glassy calmness, reflecting the surrounding mountains, — the snow-capped heads of many proclaiming their enormous altitude.

The lake was apparently little more than a mile in its widest part. On the opposite side was erected a long low dwelling, with a broad projecting roof, according to the fashion of the country. The house itself, however, was built with elegance; and the pillars supporting the roof were, according to the *ferme ornée* style of England, rough and with creepers trained around them. The intervening space between the house and the lake was composed of terrace-walks descending to the water's edge; and at a short distance from the lowest was a thatched fishing-house, so completely English in its construction, that, but for the deep blue sky above, and the exquisitely-formed and lofty mountains surrounding him, Brown would have imagined Windermere lay before him. To add to the interest of the scene, and to give a ray of hope respecting Albert, a boat appeared shooting across the lake towards

the spot where Brown had stationed himself; and, to his extreme delight, within it was Albert's self!

Brown was too well acquainted with the high-bred refinement of his friend's nature to venture upon expressing the anxiety and alarm his absence had occasioned, and the joy he experienced at his return, knowing it would only excite that friend's ridicule. Ere the boat drew near shore, he had therefore time to stifle the tear of pleasure which had rushed to his eye, but not the voice of gratitude which spoke to his heart. The friends met gaily, and Albert was the first to speak and apologize for his lengthened absence. Shortly after quitting Brown, he had reached the spot where they now stood; and attracted by the opposite dwelling, had prevailed on a fisherman, whose boat was near the shore, to take him across the lake, where, on a nearer view of the premises, he had fallen in with the owner, who proved to be an Englishman. Mr. Carlton, for so was he called, had invited him into his dwelling, introduced him to his family, and so earnestly pressed him to remain for the night, that Albert had acceded to the in-

vitation for himself and friend, and had now returned with the object of imparting the plan to Brown.

"The family," said Albert, "consists of Mr. and Mrs. Carlton, two remarkably pretty daughters, and a youth they call cousin; so jump into the boat, and you will make their acquaintance in no time."

A gentle breeze soon bore the travellers to the opposite shore; and, as they approached, the pleasing character of the dwelling was rather increased than diminished in Brown's opinion. The terrace-walk overhanging the lake communicated by marble steps with a similar walk along the front of the house, which, as has already been observed, was long and low. Its length was partly owing to two open galleries extending on each flank, unserviceable in winter but for the protection of plants, though at the present season of the year forming two very excellent and agreeable living-rooms. The one contained evident preparations for dinner; the other was furnished as a sitting-room, with couches, musical instruments, chairs and tables of all sorts and sizes, and in it were distinctly to be

seen the females of the family at their different occupations. An extensive shrubbery rising at the back of the house communicated with vineyards, interspersed with Spanish chestnut and walnut trees of prodigious size; and in it rustic seats and walks were occasionally seen peeping through the openings afforded by the shrubs, mostly indigenous to the soil.

"*Ah! che paradiso!*" exclaimed Brown.

"Paradise indeed!" murmured Albert. "And with the woman one loved, what bliss to live here! I would really give my old castle, could I dispose of it, for that smiling domain."

"Oh, I would give twenty castles for such an abode with the girl of my heart. With her, a lovely child or two, and my pencil, such a scene as this would render life too dear!—and I fear that I should murmur sadly when old age or death might come to snatch me from such bliss!"

"I wonder whether any woman could be found content to dwell for ever with her lover in that abode? The Carltons are no criterions, as they spend half the year in Inspruck."

"Content!" exclaimed Brown stoutly; "I

know many and many a woman who would be not only content, but delighted."

"You are fortunate," answered his friend, smiling. "But yonder is our host awaiting us at the steps leading from the lake; and the ladies have abandoned their employments to gaze at the strangers—not very unnatural either. I hope, Brown, you will pardon your fair one, if, at the sight of a strange sail, she allows her eyes to wander after it, even though her previous employment had been gazing at your sketch-book."

Mr. Carlton was about the age of five-and-forty; well-looking, and with a military air, which is so seldom lost, marking at least what had been his early career,—and corroborated by a sabre-cut across his forehead, tolerably conspicuous, though shaded by the curls of his dark brown hair, amongst which a slight sprinkling of grey was observable. His manners were gentlemanlike, though, as to cordiality, rather within than beyond his feelings: those who have lived long in the world are seldom natural.

"I have learned to conceal my feelings," says one: "I always assume the appearance of being

pleased," will another observe. And such is the case with the generality of mankind; Nature, poor Nature! equally abandoned in both instances!

The remainder of the family consisted of Mrs. Carlton, about the age of her husband, but looking older; the two daughters, of nineteen and twenty, pleasing and pretty girls; and a youth named Grey, who, though called "cousin," bore in truth no such affinity. He was the orphan of a comrade of Carlton's who had been killed by his side in battle, and he had since that period been adopted and educated by him.

The ladies, as is common on the Continent, were well-dressed. With the exception of the different costumes worn by the *peasantry* in Germany, perhaps that country saves our fair islanders from standing as solitary specimens of bad taste in their attire with regard to the civilized parts of Europe. We believe such to be the fact: and all that can be said in defence of our fair country-women —(and fair they are — far beyond those of any country we have visited) is, that dress is no criterion; and that even a pretty French woman's

douilette, close cap, thread hose, and *souliers de peau*, — all certainly much more appropriate to a family-party some hundred miles from the metropolis, — often conceal a very discontented, dissipated heart; whilst our English dames, in their white shoes and gloves to match, well-arranged hair, and ill-arranged satin or silk dress *décolleté*, generally speaking, are more at home in their halls and bowers than in their attire, and, spite of appearance, have a very genuine taste for poultry and pigs, flowers and fields! Dress, therefore, is no criterion; though that of the Carlton ladies, we will hope, for their own sakes, as well as those they lived with, was in its simplicity in unison with their feelings!

The dinner was served in the open gallery already described, fitted up with no ornament but flowers, and no luxury beyond a delicious thick mat so common and comfortable abroad, and which would be derided in England by even our commonest scullion-maid as a covering for *her* apartment! With whatever contempt the mat might be regarded, or even the table which stood upon the mat, yet the repast with which that table was spread defied the malice of man to con-

demn, or even his ingenuity to produce, beyond the particular spot they were in. It consisted of numerous dishes of every delicate fish, dressed variously, fresh from the lake. Wine there was in plenty, and excellent of its sort; not viewed with a jealous and anxious eye, dreading equally its consumption or neglect, but drunk at pleasure as thirst or fancy dictated. Then ensued a course of meat which showed a master's hand; for a male cook, and good of his kind, is no *rara avis* abroad as with us: a man can afford that indulgence for himself and family without any ambition to shine as a dinner-giver, or wish to render his cook rather richer, in time, than himself. Albert was somewhat of an epicure; and the excellence of the fare, which might have created an appetite even under the ribs of death, met his decided approbation: "lightly from *dish* to *dish* he flew," extolling, tasting, and almost envying the happiness of his host in living in every sense so well.

Brown, on the contrary, ate little: his regards were chiefly divided between the lovely complexion of the Miss Carlton who sat opposite to him, and the glorious prospect without, which the gallery

opened to his view. The mountains on the opposite shore seemed tinged with gold by the sun's parting ray, which, long as it had vanished from the valley below, yet in less romantic regions still gave warmth and life ; whilst the black masses of noble-shaped rocks, reposing in deep shadow, were strongly contrasted by the vivid water beneath, on which, to give life to the scene, was a busily-occupied fishing-boat. On this fair prospect Brown dwelt with as much satisfaction as his friend did on the dinner before him ; and whilst the first sighed for the genius of a Salvator or a Claude, the last reflected on the charms of a day of exercise in the mountain-air crowned by a plentiful repast, and also of his good fortune in having at last met with a man to whom poverty could be no evil, (Carlton had confessed himself poor,) for greater wealth could not procure greater advantages than he at present enjoyed : and when stern winter reigned, he had only to descend to the pleasant town of Inspruck in search of colloquial enjoyments for himself and family.

Mr. Carlton retained sufficiently of an Englishman's habits not to interfere when his better half,

collecting her brood beneath her wing, retired into the body of the mansion for the purpose of ordering coffee.

"You wish your ladies," observed Albert, "not to forget the customs of their country."

"It is so seldom that I have the pleasure of entertaining an Englishman," replied his host with a sigh, "that, when I have that felicity, my good wife is far too indulgent to interfere with a custom which she knows is agreeable to my anti-continental tastes, and to former reminiscences, as well of the camp as of the domestic board."

"It is a strange custom," said Brown. "Whence could it have originated? What barbarian could have originated the system of driving the females from his board, as soon as their bodily wants were supplied, instead of allowing them to enjoy and profit by the discourse which was to ensue?"

"Supposing always," said Mr. Carlton, smiling, "such discourse to be profitable or entertaining. And may it not be possible, also, that the gentle sex, so far from regarding such retrenchment from their privileges as an insult, felt that they were

too happy in being allowed to sit at table at all, —I speak of the barbarous ages,—and would no more have dreamt of resisting the mandates of their lords, than children of the present day, because allowed to appear with the fruit, would get up a petition of rights that they might be allowed to partake of the dinner also? Trust me, women, even now, do not think themselves aggrieved by it,—and in the days of hard-drinking must have rejoiced in the custom."

"I have my doubts," observed Albert, "if they are not secretly very well satisfied with the arrangement. Many a laugh, and animated discussion, have I seen arrested by the entrance of the 'gentlemen' from the dining-room. Though occasionally the scene opens and discovers a formal circle of well-dressed females dying of *ennui*—or, in English terms, 'bored to death,'—yet far more often is it the signal for a rapid adjustment of drapery which an independent lounge on the sofa or arm-chair has discomposed—the quick turn from the mirror, where, as she relates a lively anecdote, some laughing female is trying to bring

a stubborn ringlet into order. All this have I seen, and marvel that people should be so blind to their own interests as to require reform, where ancient custom seemed so much more congenial to the soil."

"I know not how it may be now," observed Carlton; "but, in former days, I used to think English women were treated too much as petted children instead of rational beings."

"I quite agree with you," observed Albert.

"Heavens!" exclaimed Brown, roused from the contemplation of the fading landscape before him; "Albert, what can you mean? How is it possible!"

"*I* will explain," said Carlton. "The minds of men and women abroad are more upon an equality than with us — I mean in England. There may be greater freedom in that country; but here there is more honesty. Women do not affect ignorance, nor men despise trifles: these can more readily condescend — those more easily aspire, till the line of demarcation between the two is not so strictly defined as with us. Often

and often, in England, have I heard,—I speak, alas!" added Carlton with a sigh, "of ten long years back,—often have I heard well-informed women affect ignorance of the plays of Shakspeare—the greater part of which they must have learned by heart as school-room exercises,—and adopt such silly maxims as 'The only use of being in parliament is to frank;'—'Why don't soldiers run away in battle? for then they would not be killed;'—or like Miss Larolles, 'wish the country were under ground.' These would-be-*naïve* speeches are made by Englishwomen with as perfect a knowledge of our political constitution as half the members of the house; and whilst thoroughly aware of the claims of society and the pleasures of the country. This affectation has quite its counterpart in the other sex. Do not we all know men who pretend ignorance of any part of a woman's apparel; calling a gown, by way of *conciseness*, 'that uppermost garment women wear,'—a sash, 'that string women put round their waist?' Once I heard a man go so far as to call a necklace 'a collar!' Like my idol, Cowper, 'I do loathe all affecta-

tion.' Abroad, men may be more systematically dishonest as regards the ordinary transactions of life; but they are less artificial in the intercourse of society. There is more falsehood, but less deceit. The first is an open foe from whom it may be possible to escape; not so the last,—his covert attacks are 'gendered by your fire-side—at your very board—within your portals, and render defence vain: and this has certainly contrived to bring itself to a high state of perfection in England, to the total annihilation, in many instances, of family love and domestic intercourse. But to return to my original proposition: women are too much petted in England;—to be anything, they must be everything. Like all arbitrary rule, their sway militates against itself. To escape from such thraldom, clubs flourish; and, however charming, the softer sex are generally dismissed without a sigh when they repair from the dining to the drawing room."

In such conversation the gentlemen continued for about the space of three quarters of an hour; and though not political or sporting, it was hardly possible, from the specimen given, to be such as

the ladies would have allowed had they been present.

The evening was spent agreeably, if not gaily. The ladies sang several Italian airs with young Grey: they had good natural voices, improved by instruction; and Albert, who had a tolerable voice, also took a part. Upon the supper being brought into the room, their father gave the ladies a look, which with half a blush they instantly obeyed; and casting an anxious glance towards the strangers to see how their loyalty might be regarded, they commenced the national air of "God save the King." However deficient in poetical grace the words may be, yet, such as they are, this air is so decidedly beautiful, that they have become almost a part of our constitution; and, as long as beats an English heart, that air will be identified with our tenderest recollections of home, country, and friends. Performed as now in the stillness of night,—the sounds echoed by the surrounding mountains, — the marked countenance of the retired soldier, in thought wafted back to those visions of his youth which the close of the war had so untimely

crushed — his voice murmuring in deep tones the chorus to each verse, — it was impossible to hear the melody unmoved; and when concluded, it was some time ere any one had sufficiently mastered his feelings to speak. Mrs. Carlton, however, at length drew towards the supper-table and motioned Albert to sit by her side.

"I wish," she said in a low voice, "Mr. Carlton would leave off the custom of having that air sung every evening: it only adds to his discontent."

"Discontent!—Mr. Carlton discontented!" exclaimed Albert. But Mr. Carlton having seated himself on the other side of his guest, a glance from his wife caused Albert to be silent.

Before they retired to rest, the travellers agreed to pass the following day where they were; a scheme which proved equally agreeable to both; the one being desirous to get better acquainted with his host,—the other somewhat divided between his host's daughter, and his prospect of studying more the surrounding beauties of nature; and with these two subjects of contemplation Brown sunk to rest.

Albert's midnight visions were solely of Carlton. There was something singularly noble and prepossessing in his countenance. His manners were calm, and his conversation variable; but it was evident that the society of his guests gave him pleasure; a fact of which they were eagerly assured by his family when, ere they parted for the night, they strongly pressed them to remain.

The next morning's sunrise found Brown perched upon the ledge of a rock, which served him for a seat; his pencil in his hand, his sketch-book on his knee, and the wildest scene in nature before his eyes. But as we are a bad hand at description, we trust that Brown's sketches may be more to the purpose; so we will abandon him and them to their fate, and return to the terrace-walk in front of Carlton's house, where stood Albert and his host, preparing for a walk about the grounds.

Nothing could be more lovely than the English pleasure-ground, disposed on the mountain side overhanging the lake. The shrubs were of necessity hardy, but they gave shelter and shade to the winding walks, judiciously formed so as to render the ascent easy, and, by their occasional

openings, afforded peeps at the view. What are termed summer-houses were frequently met with, about which, with evident care, were cultivated various fragrant herbs; and on tablets within were inscribed extracts from favourite authors, picturing the charms of rural retirement, its pleasures and its virtues.

Albert, who was a great admirer of poetry, perceived with no small pleasure many of his favourite passages from Pope, Thomson, and Cowper. In one of these buildings, rather more ornamented than the rest, were, however, some lines of quite a different character; and, to his surprise, he read as follows:

"Serse.—Ah, dunque Atene ancora
Ti sta nel cor! Ma che tanto ami in lei?
Temistocle.—Tutto, O Signor; le ceneri degli avi,
Le sacre leggi, i tutelari numi,
La favella, i costumi,
Il sudor che mi costa,
Lo splendor che ne trassi,
L'aria, i tronchi, il terren, le mura, i sassi."

Beneath it again appeared:—

"The language I have learn'd these forty years,
My native English, now I must forego:

And now my tongue's use is to me no more,
Than an unstringed viol or a harp;
Or like a cunning instrument cased up,
Or, being open, put into his hands
That knows no touch to tune the harmony.

* * * *

I am too old to fawn upon a nurse,
Too far in years to be a pupil now;
What is thy sentence, then, but speechless death,
Which robs my tongue from breathing native breath?"

"And pray, Mr. Carlton, who might the envious mortal be, that, grudging you your enjoyment of tranquil happiness, could have the heart to endeavour to poison your joys by such inscriptions, which, beautiful as they are in themselves, are totally inappropriate to you? Situated as *you* are, you can only think of England to lament over her inferiority to the scenes I now behold, and to rejoice that you have abandoned her comparatively 'sunless skies and fields without a flower!'"

"This seat was built with my own hands," replied Carlton; "those inscriptions were of my own selection; those roses and honeysuckles, entwining themselves around its pillars, were treasured cuttings brought from the abode of my

youth—my home—where all the holidays of my riper years were spent, and where in my old age I had hoped to die, surrounded by my children and my children's children, and lie beneath the turf I had often trod! The hope was vain: disgusted with my poverty; dreading, for my children's sake more than for my own, the world's cold laugh at the misfortunes of indigence; buoyed up also by tales of this promised land,—I came here: and here I built that seat, planted those flowers, and placed those inscriptions—need I say more?"

"Good Heaven!" replied Albert, "am I then to understand that you are discontented,—that you are not happy here? If you are so," glancing his eye around, "who then is to be satisfied?—if you are unhappy, who is to find happiness?"

"He who does his duty."

"And are you not doing yours by living here?"

Carlton shook his head.

"How mean you?"

"I cannot explain my meaning at the present moment; but, as I have the good fortune to detain you as my guest during the day, we will talk

further upon this subject. Now let us join the breakfast-table, and afterwards, in a ramble among the mountains, I will explain to you the workings of my mind, though, I greatly fear, in your estimation, at the expense of my taste, or perhaps at the expense of yours; for if I succeed in convincing you that I am right, the charms of this paradise must of necessity fade.

CHAPTER II.

The breakfast was profuse — fish, eggs, bread, honey, &c. all excellent of their kind, enhanced by the gaiety of the party. Their discourse was lively ; for though the mother was no great talker, yet the daughters were conversable and agreeable. Into their language however, and to their father's great dismay, had unwittingly crept Italian and French phrases innumerable, which took not from the piquancy of their discourse, and appeared not unnatural, considering they rarely spoke their mother-tongue excepting at home. But, with whatever annoyance he might regard his daughters' language, poor Carlton had a greater cause of distress in Grey, who had literally forgotten his English in a *pension* at Inspruck, where his guardian had placed him for the acquirement of foreign

languages, to fit him for a mercantile situation either at home or abroad. Poor Mr. Carlton himself possessed one of those singularly unbending faculties which cannot by any art be forced into the gift of tongues. He had made the attempt, but failed, on his first coming abroad; whether from want of wit, zeal, or inclination, it was not quite clear: one thing, however, became evident — the female predominance in his family was thereby decided. The whole management of society was thrown into their hands, as also were the servants, and most unquestionably the tradespeople. Carlton could not order any one single thing without their assistance as interpreters. Nevertheless the said females were far too amiable to rejoice in power so gained; and to have their father amused by one of their Inspruck beaus' *bon-mots* they would willingly have resigned half their Inspruck balls; and to have heard from him an intelligible direction addressed to a servant, they would have relinquished anything perhaps but the society of cousin Grey when they retired to the mountains. But as such compromises were out of the question, they were compelled to sub-

mit to a state of things that became daily more irksome to poor Carlton. It could not be said that he did not understand French, Italian, or German; for he could read them, and understood the first when spoken: but as to conversing therein, the matter was hopeless.

After a few ineffectual attempts at a literal translation from the English, which excited the unrestrained risibility of his hearers, Carlton had resigned himself to complete silence, and hardly ever saw company, save in his own house at such times as his wife "*received.*"

The breakfast concluded, Albert and Mr. Carlton started upon their projected walk. It was impossible for a person of Albert's observation not to discover very soon that his companion possessed even a superior mind to what he had given him credit for the evening before. He spoke of his profession, of his country, its institutions and government, comparing them with those of other countries,—not as the vain babbler to be met with at every turn of the street, but as a man of reading, observation, reflection, and not hasty in decision. Moreover, his opinions were original

(unless gathered from books); for he frankly owned to Albert that it was years since he had found a companion to converse with as he could with him.

"Are there, then, no enlightened persons at Inspruck?"

"You forget," said Carlton, colouring, "I only talk English."

"Very true; but you can hear what others say."

"Certainly; but their opinions rarely coincide with mine, even when they venture to express any, or when I am fortunate enough to understand them. You should remember, also, in this country it is only in such retirement as this, that free opinions are ever openly pronounced; and, even here, I have my doubts if, on politics, any two natives would venture, unless in an extremely low tone of voice. We English are different."

"Well, I do not believe people are the worse for a little wholesome restraint as to their expression of political opinions."

"You are a Tory, I suspect;" and Carlton smiled.

" I believe I am given credit for being in that class: but it is not my party, but my senses, which have been my instructors in showing me that, in a country like England, where the government is no sinecure, whatever may be imagined; where there are debts besides offices to pay, and taxes, not income, to pay them with; — where everybody is for himself, and all against the powers that be;—where you see some unwashed, uneducated artificer, vain as he is ignorant, governing the man by returning him—who governs the minister by voting for him—who governs, in his turn, the king who sits upon the throne! — when my senses thus show me the artificer, — in fact, king and minister, — how can a government go on? Chatham, Burleigh, Sully, and Ximenes, all combined into one, could do nothing in a country where the mob think themselves politicians,—where every man considers himself alone, and, for the attainment of some private advantage, would sacrifice every great interest of the state. Such are my political opinions, whether they be Tory or not. Am I not therefore, if they are right, justified in thinking

unlimited freedom of political discussion a plague and nuisance—an impediment to all good, and an encouragement to all evil ?"

" Yet, see how America flourishes."

" She has little to discuss. The purchase of a second-hand billiard-table is the only piece of extravagance her government has been detected in lately ; and, for want of foreign subjects, they have made a picture of the President, *pour passer le temps*, a serious matter to debate upon for two years. Fortunately for them, however, they are not tormented with petitions against taxes, slavery, and pensions, — for destroying the church or increasing its power, — for the prevention of smuggling and abolition of the revenue service — with thousands of other incongruous absurdities unknown beyond England."

Carlton smiled and shook his head. " Really, with such a contempt for public opinion, you had better live in this country, where it is at about as low an ebb as can well be, to exist at all."

" I should not object."

" You know not what you say — hear me, and judge. We have yet some time left to loiter

amongst these mountains, and I will dedicate it to the elucidation of those feelings which surprised you on reading the quotations this morning. The peace of 1815 found me a reduced captain. Half my life had been spent in active service, in which service I had received a severe wound," pointing to that on his forehead. "I was already a husband and the father of two girls. Of the numerous officers whom that peace turned adrift on the wide world, I was not one who had the greatest cause for complaint. Many were by that (so called) happy event reduced to the borders of starvation, who started in life but a few years before with every prospect, were their lives spared, of carving, with their own good sword, name, fortune, and fame. Poor fellows! how many shared Bonaparte's downfall, in all parts of Europe! But none were more to be pitied than the half-pay subaltern in England: his profession was from that moment annihilated, and, what was worse, treated with contumely; the scanty bread he ate in return for his loss of time and labour — now called "capital" by the political economists — annually canvassed by some would-be

patriot who never saw a shot fired, and weakly defended by a cringing minister dreading a people's frowns. O England! if ever I can be reconciled to having abandoned your soil, it will be from the recollection of how basely you desert, in the hour of safety, those whom in need you worship as your guardian angels! Well, the day may come when you shall have your reward, and the sin of ingratitude will light upon your own head!

"But to continue my narrative. I said I was better off than many in my circumstances. Though sorry to quit the army, and equally sorry to find that my paternal acres, which I succeeded to the year before the peace, were not over numerous, still I was not insensible to the good fortune of possessing those acres at all, with a goodly mansion thereon, and a fortune with my wife sufficient to form that of our younger children, without the necessity of rigid management during our lives, and as rigid management probably for our successors. Still, though a little sad that my military title bore no higher rank than captain, and that my Waterloo medal could only be worn in uniform, which of course I should never put on

again, yet I determined to buckle to my adverse fortune as a man, if not as a soldier, and by becoming a cultivator of the land, to turn my sword into a ploughshare in good earnest.

" I was passionately attached to the abode of my fathers; so was my wife. The children flourished around us, my farm was productive, my neighbours kind and friendly; moreover, I had always a bed for some ancient comrade, and a cheerful glass over which we might sit by the fire and talk the night away, without precisely ' weeping o'er our wounds,' or ' shouldering our crutch to show how fields were won,' yet most indubitably with the object of ' fighting our battles o'er again.' We made little excursions from home in the summer season, but never went to London: we did not wish to put ourselves into the way of ' profusion that we must not share,' so we wisely abstained from ever setting foot in that emporium of wealth and luxury.

" In this manner several years passed away. I have before observed, my wife had some fortune—on which my younger children depended, and the interest of which was certainly full half of our in-

come. This fortune was entirely in the hands of a man of remarkably bad private character, yet who had established a great reputation for public integrity! This fraudulent banker, for such he proved, dazzled the eyes of the world by the splendour of his establishment, which was considered a proof of his resources and not of his roguery, and was in great measure owing to the system of credit which, as long as the law of arrest exists, will flourish in England; — that law which affords such a delicious instrument of revenge in the hands of those who from avarice or credulity give unlimited trust!

"But the frauds I allude to are too well known for me to enter into the particulars of the case;— suffice it to say, my wife was one of his victims, when the house of Silverthorp failed: but I beg to disavow any connexion with those who, anxious no doubt to have as many companions in misfortune as possible by rendering common such nefarious practices, petitioned for his life. His death certainly did us no good; it did not restore my wife's fortune, which, principal and interest, had been entirely lost. But he deserved his end; and

had he been saved—had the government attended to the perverted feelings of an absurd multitude, they could hardly have done less than offer him the chancellorship of the exchequer, that his financial prowess should be at least used for their own benefit in future. It would have been but a very half sort of measure, to spare his life, and not turn that life to their own account—most particularly when a generous public considered him guiltless of offence!

"This loss of fortune was a terrible blow to us: from that moment, for the space of two years, my life was one of perpetual anxiety. In the days of my comparative prosperity I had purchased land which was to be paid for by instalments from the interest of my wife's fortune—alas! now I had no longer the means. I retrenched our establishment so as to live within our reduced income, and also to pay my debts; but anxiety of mind brought on a fever, increased by the thoughts that if I died, though my debts would die with me, yet my wife and children would be totally unprovided for, with the exception of my eldest boy, upon whom my small estate was entailed. Our ex-

penses were not much diminished, and my creditor became clamorous for the purchase-money. To live on where we were was next to impossible, but where to go was the question. It was then that a friend of mine wrote to me from Turin, begging me to join him, extolling the climate, the cheapness, and beauty of the country. I arranged my affairs as well as I could, by letting my place and insuring my life ; and having placed my two boys at school, I started for Italy, with my wife, daughters, and poor Grey.

" I found my friend and his wife certainly in the height of enjoyment—well dressed, well fed, and devoted to the theatres, *soirées*, and public drives ; but it so happened that their pleasures were not our pleasures, and that our lives at home and theirs had been very different. The transition from London, Brighton, or Bath, to Turin, was trifling ; but the transition from the life of an agriculturist on his own property, living in his own house where his fathers had lived before him, and amongst his earliest friends, to that of an Italian prince, taking his daily drive, his siesta, eating his ice, lounging in his opera-box, and

talking of the ballet or of the last Parisian fashions, was too much opposed to be supportable.

"At the end of six months I made a rapid retreat; but as my finances would not allow us to move far, we established ourselves at Inspruck, which, as far as economy is concerned, I believe to be the best place we could have fixed upon.

"Five years since I bought, for a mere trifle, the ground on which this house stands. I have made it such as you now see; and I must allow, so far, have had no small amusement in planning, building, planting, and improving it, at so small an expense, that I have been repaid over and over again by the cheapness (even compared with Inspruck) with which we live here for six months in the year.

"Such is my little tale; and I must now crave your pardon for having detained you so long in its narration."

"But, my dear sir, you have told me nothing. You promised an explanation of *the feelings* which led to your placing those inscriptions I this morn-

ing read: they might have held good on the walls of your opera-box at Turin, but assuredly not here."

"Here, or anywhere," replied Carlton, "away from *Home*. I could not exist in Turin, but here I am unhappy. It is the loss of kindred minds that I feel. I am isolated and wretched in this country: I have no pursuit, no interest. Existence, mere existence, I certainly have gained: my girls have been well educated, and dance and sing to their hearts' content; but even they feel that they are but strangers in this land. Supposing I could speak their language fluently, what would it matter with those who profess to regard my hero Wellington with contempt, and enviously affect to underrate *his* campaigns! —who ridicule our tastes, and talk of our fogs, smoke, and beef—who, themselves governed by an interested priest, believe us protestants utterly unworthy of being saved! Even on literature, which might be supposed neutral ground, we are incapable of conversing. Though they affect to admire Scott and Byron, yet of modern history they know next to nothing; and as I know nothing

of the charms of Schiller, Goëthe, or Wieland, the case is hopeless. On politics, did we agree, which I should much doubt, the government would soon interfere——"

"Ah!" exclaimed Albert, interrupting him, "it is the government, I suspect, which poisons all continental joys to so many Englishmen. Without suffering in any other way, they suffer mentally, and in imagination undergo all the agonies of imprisonment and death without trial—seizure of papers—confiscation of goods—domiciliary visits, and every other possibility an arbitrary government can be supposed capable of—without having the satisfaction, did such in reality take place, of publishing, for the edification of the world at large, a narrative of all their terrible sufferings! With another form of government, how different would be your feelings, and, I suspect, how much easier would be the foreign language to acquire!"

Carlton smiled. "I certainly neither like the government nor the religion of the people among whom I live; but yet I do not believe they are unhappy under the first, or the worse for the second: on the contrary, I believe no race of

peasantry to be happier, or, in general, better off, than all those I have met with either in this country or Lombardy; but what provokes me beyond all patience is the frivolity of conversation, consisting of trifling *phrases*. But it pleases women —and, alas!——"

"You tremble for a foreign son-in-law."

"That is the truth, and my misfortune. Anne has an admirer. If we remain here, they will probably marry; then will ensue children of different religions—distance from her own relations—jealousy of foreigners, particularly English: in fact, I know all that such a step must entail, even though she were happy in her husband. Poor Anne!"

"Well, she is not married yet."

"No—and it may be as well not to anticipate evils. But I have wearied you with my concerns, and I congratulate you upon the house being in view. On the terrace I perceive Mr. Brown displaying his sketch-book to Agatha, and Anne is talking very earnestly to some one as she leans over the parapet. The Count! I trust it is not him! Once he did find his way here.

Oh no; it is only poor Grey: my eyes deceived me."

"Deceived you indeed:" thought Albert; "and, if my eyes do not greatly deceive me, there appears to be so good an understanding between Mr. Grey and Miss Anne, that the Count must be the most blind, sanguine, or ill-used of men to persevere with his suit."

Mr. Carlton's was not a singular situation, nor were his plaints wholly owing to a bilious temperament: he was a man of strong domestic feelings, zealously attached to the institutions of his country, her literature, her men, sports, and politics; a soldier, country gentleman, and agriculturist. Zealous in his friendships, he had mustered around him a little knot of relations, fellow-soldiers and neighbours, who entered into all his joys, and felt for all his sorrows. Though in the country, he was not secluded; though remote from the metropolis, his society was select. Perhaps for this chequered life there had been too much brightness in his existence: the dark cloud rolled on, and in his struggles to extricate himself from his unforeseen embarrassments, his endea-

vours were not favoured by fortune—and in despair he abandoned his country, and retired abroad to support his misfortunes with more feeling than philosophy.

The last evening the travellers spent beneath his roof, Carlton evidently exerted himself to banish from Albert's mind any unfavourable impressions that his confidence of the morning might have created, as to his disposition being prone to discontent so as to poison the happiness of himself or his children. Having given vent to those feelings which had been secretly preying upon his mind, he really was cheerful, and entered into any lively scheme his daughters proposed with perfect good humour, if not with glee.

In such a mood, his children found no difficulty in prevailing upon him and his guests to accompany them after dinner to a *fête* in a neighbouring village. In the amusements of our peasantry in England we have nothing to produce which can for an instant be compared with such a *fête* as that to which Carlton escorted his guests. Putting aside the picturesqueness of dress and superiority of music, which are natural to foreigners

and unnatural to us, it is their superiority in genuine mirth, with a proper sense of decorum; in their indulgence of refreshment, and not excess; in being rustics, not boors; simple, yet civilised; and though at times rough, never rude, —which has often rendered doubtful the practical *good* or happiness arising from unrestrained liberty.

Brown, Grey, and the two girls soon joined the dancers. Carlton, who was very fond of music, was attentive to the band; and Albert seated himself by Mrs. Carlton. She was a woman of inferior understanding to her husband, but devotedly attached to him. Had he been satisfied with his foreign residence, the probability is, she would have discovered absolute perfection in everything around her; but seeing all objects, as she did, through his eyes, and being the faithful depositary of all his feelings, hopes, fears, and disappointments, she had adopted his opinions, perhaps in rather an exaggerated degree, as her own; and this Albert was not backward in discovering. She spoke with natural sorrow of her separation from her sons; but the horror she ex-

pressed at the idea of her daughters marrying strangers was evidently only the echo of her husband's sentiments; as might also be said of the manner in which she spoke with regard to their comparative importance in the Tyrol to what they were in England.

"We are greater people here than at home, certainly. Poor as we are, we are richer than many, and have, for the time being, a decided place in society, and amongst persons, in their country, of far greater importance than those we lived with at home. But our consequence here rests entirely upon our having the power to support a certain establishment, and being both able and willing to receive to a certain extent; — in short, in our purse lies the secret of our friends, popularity, and even good name. In England, how different! Living with those who loved us for ourselves—whose fathers had known our fathers, whose children would know our children—not our fortune, but our character made us respected. Our failings were regarded with a lenient eye; our little prejudices indulged; our pleasures and pains were sympathised with by all around us.

It is vain abroad to look for that we abandoned: our place in the world has departed from us. We must be satisfied with the slippery, and, I had almost said, factitious tenure of that we at present enjoy. It is better perhaps than we deserve, strangers and pilgrims as we are on the earth!"

Mrs. Carlton was too good a wife to have much acquaintance with her husband's affairs. She knew they were embarrassed; but whether to the extent of two hundred or twenty thousand, she was perfectly ignorant. Albert's efforts were vain, therefore, as to gaining any intelligence from her in that respect. A hint to his friend Brown, however, was the means of ascertaining the desired information from Carlton himself. He granted it in the most unhesitating manner, as Brown's avowed poverty and profession totally precluded the idea of his having any other object than perhaps idle curiosity or sympathy. And though his friend's rank proclaimed better things (Albert, from courtesy, as a marquis's younger son, bore the title of "Lord,") yet Carlton knew enough of the world to be perfectly aware that

such rank was no criterion by which to judge of its possessor's wealth, but, on the contrary, often symptomatic of more poverty than he himself had ever known.

In detailing, therefore, to Brown the extent of his embarrassments, which did not at present amount to more than two thousand pounds, he expressed his determination to consult alone the future interests of his children, and to remain in the Tyrol until he should have quite freed his property. He little dreamt the generous projects Albert meditated; or, though a younger brother, that in right of his mother he was possessed of very considerable property, funded as well as landed, far beyond what his own wants as a bachelor required, but not more than his generous nature was too happy to dispense in aiding the less fortunate of his fellow species.

The travellers completed their tour in the Tyrol, and returned to Munich, where they separated; Brown remaining there for the sake of its incomparable gallery, and Albert continuing his route to Vienna.

Before he took leave of his friend, and of Bavaria, he addressed the following letter to Carlton.

"My dear Sir,

"You possess the power of doing me the greatest possible favour. I am rich and independent; I hope, therefore, you will not decline giving me the pleasure of accepting the bill I enclose — through means of which, I trust, all your pecuniary difficulties may be happily settled, and that I shall be instrumental in restoring to his country so excellent a subject, citizen, parent, and example.

"Albert Lumley."

Time was, when for a hero to accept benefits, whether of food, raiment, or money, even were he starving, naked, and penniless, would have been derogatory to all principle in novel-writing. That fashion, like many others, has had its day, and the dealers in fiction are no longer bound to harrow up the souls of their readers, or victims, to a pitch of positive despair, when the exalted Emmelina, with starvation before her eyes,

throws from her with disdain the precious pocket-book of notes proffered to her in distress; or where her counterpart, Ethelina, declines food, bed, or raiment, from the vile monster who has enclosed her within four walls — adding thus to her other distresses, unchanged garments, an empty stomach, and an aching head! It is to be supposed that people wrote according to what the world then was: if so, "the days of chivalry are gone" indeed!

In these more fortunate but less romantic times, we do not find that Brown in Guy Mannering scrupled appropriating to himself, in his distress, a part of the gipsy's treasure; or that Milnwood declined the bounty offered to him as he quitted England; or that Miss Wardour deemed it incumbent upon her to accompany her father to jail, rather than receive from her lover the means of remaining in their own castle. With such authority, we may venture to declare, that in a manly, unaffected strain of heartfelt gratitude, Carlton accepted the generous loan proffered to him by Lord Albert, adding at the same time his hopes of repaying the same.

Before, however, any part of that sum was appropriated to his own purposes, he ascertained from Brown, who still remained at Munich, whether the fortune of Albert justified the liberality of the offer, or his own propriety in accepting it.

The answer he received proved so far satisfactory, that six months after the travellers' visit to the Tyrol, Carlton was once more established beneath the roof of his forefathers.

CHAPTER III.

About one year from the period at which this tale commences, Albert returned to England and embarked in the life common to many a gentleman there — a life more to be considered as devoid of pain than as one of actual pleasure — a life of neither positive virtue nor ostensible vice. This undefined state of things was brought to a more decided character as regards one respect, by Albert uniting his fortunes in the course of time to those of a very beautiful girl; and in the possession of this gentle, affectionate, and good-tempered, as well as lovely being, he could not be pronounced otherwise than decidedly happy.

It was in the course of the first few months of

his marriage that circumstances, unnecessary to relate, caused Albert and his bride to be travelling in one of our maritime counties.

Late in the evening of an October day they entered upon a lonely and wide-spreading heath. Far as the eye could reach nothing presented itself but wild-looking flocks of sheep scattered unmindful of their shepherd, and rabbits in countless numbers disporting themselves wherever they could find the most barren, sandy, and uncheerful-looking piece of ground for the establishment of their republic. Through this comfortless region, boasting of nothing good but its road, Albert and his lady journeyed fast as four horses could convey them; but, fast as they flew, "wilds immeasurably spread seemed lengthening as they went." The heath seemed positively to extend as they advanced: north, south, east, and west, nought appeared but patches of dark furze, occasional clumps of still darker fir-trees; and as for living creatures, none save the above-mentioned sheep and rabbits; the first of whom, departing from their usually meek character, assumed an air of wild independence,

eyeing the carriage of the travellers with a look which appeared nearly to border on an intention of disputing their right of way. Not so the poor rabbits, who at the very sound of wheels abandoned their unfinished evening meal, and scampering, shaking, and jostling each other, sought refuge in their secret recesses with the utmost precipitation.

"What an odious prospect!" said the lady, glancing her eye from the carriage window with an involuntary shudder.

"Yes, very ugly," replied her companion in a less dissatisfied tone; "but I dare say it is no bad country to shoot over."

"But you would not like to inhabit such a place?"

"No, my love, not for worlds,—except with you, Sophia. But still I make no doubt game exists here in great profusion.—Ah! there rises as strong a covey of birds as I have seen this season."

"Poor birds!" said Sophia, "to live in such an open, wretched country."

" Happy birds, rather, to live remote from village poachers or squires."

At that moment Albert, who had advanced his head towards the window watching where the birds had lighted, saw to his no small dismay an additional cause of interest,—namely, the fore-wheel of his carriage, which, apparently tired of perpetual motion, had made a bolt towards the furze, amongst which it soon was extended in perfect repose. Of course this vagary on the part of the wheel produced the natural effect of throwing the carriage on its side: Albert fell upon his, fairly buried beneath his wife, a vast number of books, boxes, cloaks, and other moveable articles. The valet was thrown from the rumble, but, lighting on a furze-bush, was unhurt, and instantly on his legs to assist her ladyship's woman screaming from without, and his lord and lady, who were suffocating within.

The wheel was broken. It was vain, therefore, to think of replacing it without more scientific aid than the postboys and valet. There was nothing left for them but to despatch one of the boys,

and to desire him to make the best of his way to the nearest town for a blacksmith, wheelwright, and all such other persons as could afford relief in their present disaster.

The evening was as dull as an October evening well could be without rain. Albert, having made his wife as comfortable as circumstances permitted, by seating her on the cushions of the carriage by the road-side enveloped in all the cloaks and shawls they could command, walked forth himself to discover whether any abode of man lay near, where, should the worst come to the worst, they might find shelter for the night. His lady had barely lost sight of his stately form in the distance, when she was startled by the clear breathing of a horse evidently approaching at a gallop. Surprised, but by no means sorry, she turned her eyes towards the quarter whence the sound proceeded, and in an instant saw, as if rising from the earth, at a short distance from where she was seated, and in an opposite direction to that her husband had just taken, a handsome boy about fifteen years of age, mounted on a most beautiful small thorough-bred horse, snorting, tossing its

pretty head, and trying every possible way of jumping, curveting, and bounding, so as to prevent the prickling furze from hurting his tender legs. It was reined in at length by the distressed female's side, whose countenance gave evident marks of satisfaction at the appearance of one likely to afford some sort of assistance in their emergency; and, moreover, one in so civilized a form that he would not have been discreditable, under similar circumstances, even in Hyde Park.

The young stranger, bowing gracefully, begged to be informed as to the misfortune which had occurred, and to know if he could be of any assistance. The history of the disaster was soon detailed, and the steps to remedy it pointed out.

"If you are to wait here the arrival of the people from B——, where your postboy is gone, I fear that you will yet have a long time to remain. I wish you would allow me to offer you the shelter of my father's house: I am sure he would be most happy to be of any use to you, either till your carriage is repaired, or for the night should your journey not be one of great importance."

Nothing could more surprise the lady than the youth's offer, proposed with a sincerity which seemed to argue that she was not so far from the haunts of men as she had hitherto imagined.

"You live, then, near here, sir?"

"Behind that clump of firs, about a mile and a half from us. You cannot discern the house, on account of a rapid fall in the ground directly after you pass the trees. There is a village not far off, which is also hidden from view."

"You are very kind indeed," replied Lady Albert gratefully. "My present situation is anything but agreeable, and I feared was hopeless of amendment till our carriage could be repaired. I am not, however, alone; my husband cannot be far off, and as soon as he joins me, should he approve, I shall most thankfully accept your offer, for a few hours at least. Ah, there is Lord Albert!"

"Lord Albert!" repeated the youth.

"Do you know any one of that name, that it should surprise you?"

"My father has a friend, and more than a friend, of that name."

To *prôner* his good deeds not being in the least a part of Albert's character, his wife was perfectly ignorant of his generosity to Carlton: the youth's observation, therefore, produced no suspicion in Sophia's mind as to who he might be; and the brief interval which intervened before her husband's return was spent in mere commonplace remarks on the weather and country.

When Albert joined them, the young stranger's proposition to fetch with all speed his mother's pony carriage, and convey Sophia to his father's, was readily embraced by his lordship, with many thanks both as regarded the one and the other for the kindness shown.

As the youth, however, seemed ready to depart, Albert, gently laying his hand on his bridle-rein, said smilingly, "One thing I ought to explain—who we are; for, wild as this region is, I cannot yet suppose it to be so absolutely in a state of nature, regarding the duties of hospitality, as to consider any other title but that of stranger superfluous: we have names ——"

"Which, I suspect," replied the youth, smiling in his turn, "have before now reached my ear.

Have I not the pleasure of addressing Lord Albert Lumley ?"

" Ah ! how came I known ?"

" By your deeds, my lord. My name is Carlton."

" Then indeed are we fortunate, Sophia," said Albert, turning to his wife. " By a singular chance again am I likely to claim a night's lodging beneath the roof of one who, by former experience, I am well aware can render such courtesy doubly valuable by the charms of his society."

" In this respect I think my father will consider the good fortune equal," said young Carlton as, giving the rein to his horse's head, he sprang onwards to where the dark mass of firs concealed his paternal mansion. Hardly was he lost to view, and had time to perform his errand, before a garden-chair was seen issuing from behind the trees, conducted by Carlton himself, which, by rather a more circuitous route than that his son had taken, reached the spot where the travellers were stationed. The countenance of Carlton was not easily observed as he warmly clasped the hand of Albert within his own ; but there was a huskiness and

agitation in the tone of his voice as he welcomed him, and in his manner of expressing the hope that he would accompany him home, which fully denoted that the warmth of feeling which had embittered his hours of exile, could be as readily called forth when the claim was gratitude.

Everything was speedily arranged. The travellers were to remain for the night at Mr. Carlton's: their carriage was to be got as well as it could to the house, and there repaired on the following morning. Carlton handed Lady Albert into his little chaise; her maid was seated behind, with as many of her ladyship's light goods as could be conveyed; and the handsome youth's horse was proffered to Albert with so much good will, that he hardly knew how to decline, especially as the youth said that he should like to stay and see the fun of moving the carriage. Albert therefore mounted the horse, and accompanied his lady, who was conducted by Carlton along a narrow road, or rough track, formed solely by clearing away the furze.

We formerly described the abode of Carlton in the Tyrol, and cannot in justice do otherwise

than pay the same compliment to his present habitation, where Albert became his accidental guest; more particularly as it was that fondly-cherished home, which in yearning after, sighing for, thinking, and dreaming of, had made Carlton overlook the beauties and luxury he met with abroad. With his heart and soul in England and at home, the Tyrol, splendid and beautiful as it was, excited no other feeling than dissatisfaction, amounting perhaps to disgust; while the poor town of Inspruck attracted his positive hatred.

But to describe Carlton Hall—for so was it styled—is our business. It was a square red-brick mansion, presenting an elevation of two rows of large heavily framed sash-windows, above which was an embattlement attempting to screen a hideous roof, crowned by a vast number of chimneys, out of which, to Albert's and his lady's great delight, being somewhat chilled by their evening passed "*al fresco*," arose several columns of thick white smoke. In the centre of the house stood a sturdy oak door, painted white, approached by a flight of stone steps, with an iron

balustrade on either side, once having been green, and ornamented by two stunted Corinthian pillars, supporting an entablature of narrow dimensions, over which appeared the family arms, in a decayed state from damp and time.

Towards this house the travellers approached by a rapid descent, of about a hundred yards, from where the road intersected the plantation, extending along the brow of the hill as a protection against the north-east wind, that came sweeping over the heath. At the foot of the hill, and in front of the entrance-door, there was all the grandeur of a gravel road, winding round half-a-dozen laurel bushes. On one side of which road, and at a short distance, was a garden wall, with tar-painted rails before it, to protect from the cattle a few apricot trees, that produced once in ten years fruit for the wasps; and on the corresponding side, a very respectable-looking stable, with a somewhat disproportionate clock, surmounted by a still more disproportionate weathercock, which in the shape of a huge fox, considerably larger than life, added its share to the dignity of the scene.

The travellers entered the house by a vestibule,

from whence a low flight of broad steps communicated with a large hall opening upon a garden to the south; the country beyond, though cultivated, being flat and ugly. To the right of the inner hall, was a comfortably sized dining-room; and to the left, a drawing-room, into which Carlton ushered his guests.

Every one is acquainted with the appearance of the drawing-room in a family mansion about a hundred miles from London, appertaining to people who possess some little modern taste, many family relics, and not much superfluous cash. There were the ancient blue damask hangings, and the modern chintz window-curtains; then there were some commodes of painted wood, according to the fashion of 1800, put sadly to shame by a highly-polished rose-wood French cabinet, some twenty years their junior. In character with this very pretty article of furniture, was an equally pretty French clock, which stood on the chimney-piece amongst a vast number of odd-shaped cups and vases, of indifferent china, brought forth to light from the family china-closet. Then there was a good old picture in

oils, in a dingy frame, and two modern bad ones in water-colours, glittering in fresh gilding and glass. The rug was new, the carpet old; the couches and chairs rather the worse for wear, particularly the couch, the partial treatment of which piece of furniture was rather too evident. By way of modern elegance, was a table covered with knick-knacks, of no particular cost, beauty, or use; and by way of being more in character with the family, was a large table well littered with sketch-books, music-books, work-boxes and bags, letters, and new publications; round which were seated Mrs. Carlton, her second daughter, a maiden sister of Mr. Carlton's, and our old acquaintance Brown.

The reception of the travellers was most cordial. To be sure, Mrs. Carlton was not so well dressed as when Lord Albert last saw her; England had done its customary mischief in that respect: but she appeared far more animated, happy, and at her ease; though Albert was sorely at a loss to imagine wherefore, when he looked at the desolate prospect without, and thought of their beautiful house in the Tyrol.

Brown's presence afforded no surprise to Albert, as Carlton had already informed him of his being there. But he missed the eldest daughter and Grey. Before he had inquired after them, Carlton observed —

"My family is not so large as when we last met. Grey and my eldest girl joined their poverty together and established themselves at Munich, where he has entered into a mercantile concern, which will, I hope, convert their poverty into comfort, if not wealth. But we miss her sadly, poor girl! And Grey too; he was an excellent youth, though he would frenchify, or even worse—forget his mother-tongue."

"And the Austrian count?"

"Oh! I need not have been so alarmed, — money was his object — and Grey was his rival, which I ought to have seen: but fathers are usually the last to observe, or at least the last to be informed. But we have other subjects to discuss, and if Lady Albert Lumley does not mind sitting down in her travelling dress, the dinner shall be placed immediately on the table. She has only to give her orders and we await her pleasure."

Her ladyship was not at all disinclined to dispense with ceremony — perhaps from being aware that her grey satin travelling dress was very becoming. Be this as it may, she was soon escorted by Carlton into the dining-room, and the party seated themselves around his hospitable board.

It has been before observed that the luxuries of the table were not thrown away upon Lord Albert; he could appreciate a good *artiste* and a good dinner; and with the excellent and *soigné* repast his host had formerly bestowed upon him fresh in his memory, three ponderous covers were uplifted, and displayed to his view at the top a leg of mutton, at the bottom a leg of pork, and a roast goose in the centre — all productions of the farm; as were, of the garden, dishes of hard potatoes, unmashed turnips, prize carrots, and an overgrown cauliflower! Albert sighed and thought of the *suppe* and *forelle* of the Tyrol, followed by a *soubise*, *piqué de chevreuil*, and a *mayonaise!*

Happily the second course was an improvement upon the first. Brown's sport of a preceding day was displayed in the shape of some partridges and a hare, supported on each side by a

rice pudding and an apple tart. After the cheese came the dessert, consisting of a plate of withered oranges, dry biscuits, apples, and almonds and raisins. The wine, however, was excellent, and Albert felt almost ashamed of diluting with water, as was his custom, that which he was well aware must have cost so much to purchase. Over this dessert the party sat and talked and laughed; and when the ladies were gone, the gentlemen still sat laughing and talking also; for Carlton, not otherwise than pleasant in former times, was now positively agreeable. His son was a lively and good-humoured boy, and Brown, as usual, ever ready to talk and laugh on any subject.

In due time they found the ladies deeply engaged with the business of tea. The evening was spent gaily—the visit to the Tyrol was talked over—music ensued; and, such is the fickleness of human nature, the supper-tray was brought in and its contents assailed without any one being sufficiently wound up by sentiment or *amor patriæ* to make the walls echo, ere they sat down, to the national anthem of 'God save the King.'"

"Your taste is changed, methinks," said Albert to his host, smiling. "Poor 'God save the King' is gone out of fashion."

"Nay, not entirely so; I still think the air one of the most beautiful that was ever composed. But ——"

"Times are changed," interrupted Albert. "You are, perhaps, a convert to the doctrines of liberalism so freely promulgated at the present day; and when political unions are paramount, and royalty at a discount, you consider what was praiseworthy abroad to be only ridiculous in England."

"By no means. I am not one of those who regard political unions as otherwise than injurious to a country where there is a free parliament and press. All real abuses must by such channels be made known and rectified, and it is the fault of the people themselves if corrupt or unworthy representatives are elected by them to attend to the interests of the country at large. That which reason supports should never be yielded to clamour; and I conceive the proceedings of a par-

liament, properly constituted, to be those of reason; whilst political unions of all sorts can only seek to obtain by clamour whatever their separate opinions or interests are inclined to exact.

"That I have a slight turn to liberalism, I allow, — and, indeed, some of my neighbours accuse me of radicalism; but with the various objects that daily and hourly remind us by their reality of the land we dwell in, there is no longer any necessity for the artificial aid of a song to arouse our feelings to the reflections that we are Englishmen, or to remind us of our duties as subjects and citizens. I observe that you are incredulous; but indeed, my dear lord, you are mistaken: I am no convert to the follies of the times, and I mistrust a Radical as much as I ever did a Tory. I would compare the principle of government which I desire ever to support, if such a principle is to be found in any cabinet, to that mode of riding I have observed to answer best with a young and high-spirited horse, — a strong hand, but a light rein—a good temper, and an unflinching nerve."

"This man is happy then!" said Albert to Brown, as before breakfast the following morning they stood on that front of the house towards the flower-garden which, at about ten yards from the door, was separated from a grass field by an iron fence. "Carlton is happy here. When gazing from his terrace in the Tyrol, on a view to make one drunk with rapture, he was a victim only to spleen; but on this walk, which with all his care he cannot prevent being overrun with moss—with this faint attempt at sunshine, and with no other view than his farm extending itself as far as the eye can reach in alternate squares or oblongs of turnips, stubble or fallow, his heart bounds with delight, his spirit is buoyant, his step agile, and his face smiling. Strange the love of occupation! —the love of home! Well, I will not quarrel with his taste: what say you, Brown?"

Brown shrugged his shoulders and smiled. "Men were formed for the soil on which they were born, I believe. I first drew breath in London, and have certainly ever found a good deal of cockneyism in my disposition; and I can always paint and finish my pictures best in my small

apartment in Queen Anne-street. Carlton, I make no doubt, has the same attachment to this frightful soil and country as you have to Morley Castle."

"Morley Castle! my good friend, Morley Castle is a residence for a prince to covet."

"Perhaps Carlton, in his heart, thinks the same of this place. But I see the fire blazing within, and a steaming urn adding its genial warmth also: yes, there it is, the English breakfast table, with all its comforts of hot rolls, tea, coffee, eggs, and bread of every fashion; and last, though not least of its productions, is the newspaper, with which Carlton, I observe, is staying his impatience for his morning repast."

> "'Tis pleasant through the loopholes of retreat
> To peep at such a world; to see the stir
> Of the great Babel, and not feel the crowd;'"

said Albert. "Do you know, the only genuine fit of *mal du pays* I ever had, was once in Sicily, where no newspaper, not even Galignani, could reach me. I positively fell ill in consequence, and was only restored to health upon my arrival at Leghorn, where, of course, the misfortune was

easily remedied; but I resolved never to trust myself again out of the reach of a newspaper—like some prudent females who, on the sea, would never lose sight of land."

"Before we join the breakfast-table, I have a secret to tell you, Albert," said Brown, half laughing and looking rather foolish. "I —— But perhaps you might have observed my attentions last night to Agatha Carlton?"

"I did not, my good fellow; but Sophia did. Trust a woman at any time for discovering the hundredth part of a flirtation. If faith can be placed in blood, I congratulate you upon your choice as to domestic virtues. But the funds? —my good fellow, whence come they?"

"My house in Queen Anne-street, happily for me, does not require to be kept up like Morley Castle; and, thanks to some of my wealthy patrons, my art is at present rather lucrative. Then Carlton Hall, with all its faults, may be as much my home as I like to make it; and my own relations, as well as those of Agatha, are very kind, and, as far as they are able, generous. But we must hasten in—Carlton is advancing towards us;

and, if I mistake not, a very pretty dress has been added to the ornaments of the breakfast-room, with which dress you may possibly be more familiar than myself. So of my concerns more hereafter."

To breakfast the gentleman accordingly adjourned; and, whilst occupied in its discussion, they were indulged in hearing the leading article of the Times newspaper read by Carlton, — to which said lecture his wife was profoundly attentive, but whether to the amount of comprehension it might be difficult to say. His son would perhaps have understood the subject somewhat better, were it not that, from being seated opposite Lady Albert, his eyes and attention were both irresistibly impelled towards the examination of her very perfect features, her beautiful hair, its mode of arrangement, and the fashion of her pelisse. And, strange to say, her husband's eyes were attracted precisely in the same manner! Less strange, however, were Brown's regards towards Miss Carlton; for, as her lover, it would be still more extraordinary had they been otherwise bestowed.

Carlton, however, for his own edification at

least, continued to read an article fraught with momentous intelligence; and when he concluded, a judicious remark from his sister proved that, as far as she was concerned, his labour was not in vain; — this remark had also the twofold advantage of screening, at the same time, the inattention of the rest of his audience.

The breakfast over, and the repairs of Albert's carriage being announced as completed, he prepared for departure. But ere he took leave, Carlton requested a few minutes' conversation, and opening the door into his own room, they entered therein. Albert easily imagined what was to be the nature of his discourse, and had accordingly made up his mind as to the answer he should give.

Carlton spoke in warm and unaffected terms of his sense of the obligation Albert had conferred upon him; and, at the same time informing him of an unexpected and late accession of a small funded property, and his consequent desire of repaying the loan, he tendered him a cheque for the amount.

Albert smiled. "I am afraid that I explained

my meaning very imperfectly when I had the happiness of being of any assistance to you. What I then did was intended as a gift, and not as a loan."

"My dear lord, the gift I could not have accepted; the loan I might."

"Well, be it as you will; but pray let us say no more about it; only, if you are determined to view the transaction in that light, all I beg is that you will consider the debt as transferred to Brown: he is a worthy fellow and my friend, and moreover, as he informs me, about to become your son-in-law. If, therefore, without inconvenience to yourself, you can now or at any future period give it to him, I shall consider the sum as repaid with interest. Let him and your daughter benefit thereby; but let me hear no more on the subject, I beg. We will not, by cancelling a gift, anticipate the evil days which I fear may too soon arrive, when, from pride and penuriousness—qualities which make such rapid growth in the world—to give and receive will be equally unpleasant to our feelings, our habits, and perhaps even our understandings. The having assisted your

temporal affairs, I intend should promote my eternal ones, and be some set-off against the tremendous score of foolish acts which wealth, so bounteously bestowed for far higher purposes, has led me to perform. Now let us join the ladies; and remember your promise, that you will all give us the pleasure of your company at Morley Castle next Christmas, if you can tear yourself away from —Home!"

AURELIA.

To be wroth with one we love,
Doth work like madness in the brain.

AURELIA.

CHAPTER I.

Those who understand their duty, and guide their conduct by principle as well as taste, find perhaps more to interest them, and engage their heart and mind, in the Church than in any other profession. Human nature, whether in smiles or tears, in gloom or sunshine, deformity or beauty, is unveiled to the microscopic eye of an intelligent minister of the gospel without that delusive colouring which deceives the generality of the world. The hearts of his flock are in his hands, and with such knowledge he should strive to smooth their rugged path in this life, and obtain for them mercy and happiness hereafter.

Such a man was Mr. Allen ;—and a large irregular, ugly village gave proofs, in its moral beauty,

that his kindness and wisdom had not fallen on a barren soil. Still, even there, one house—and that nearly the largest in the place — looked sad. In that one abode, poverty, infirmity, age, and sorrow, stood prominent in all their native deformity, unredeemed by those qualities of brightness which give even to affliction a grace, and reconcile man to his lot upon earth. It was the mansion of the poor! There all the vice and idleness, rooted out from the rest of the village, made a stand,—and the poorhouse, with the penitent and infirm, became also the asylum of the discontented, the profane, and the depraved. It was only in his visits to this mansion that despondency ever accompanied Mr. Allen's steps, and that disappointment attended his attempts to improve or console.

On one particular day, to which this tale relates, Mr. Allen had wasted many precious hours in admonishing those whose feelings were callous from wickedness or misfortune, and in attempting to console the hearts of individuals who believed money to be the only good required, and also their

positive right from one better clothed or better fed than themselves.

With a heavy sigh he was retreating from this abode of despair, when his attention was attracted by the figure of a woman seated so as to catch a little warmth from a ray of sunshine, which, though subdued and cold, penetrated through the dusky panes and heavy framework of a small elevated window. A tattered cloak was drawn close round her emaciated form, her elbows rested on her knees, her hands covered her face, and her black hair, escaping in tangled, matted locks from beneath a ragged cap, formed a singular contrast to the bloodless fingers partially buried in them; and these bloodless fingers were of a form and size not to have disgraced the fairest figure and most high-born dame.

"Who is that woman?" inquired Mr. Allen of the parish officer attending him.

"She, poor thing! have no real right to be here, sir,—she be a stranger; but the doctor do say she can't last long. She were took with a broken blood-vessel at the door of Waters, at the

public-house, and he gave her shelter for a night or so; but she had got no money, and soon became an inconvenience, like, to him; so, by way of charity I may say, I had her moved here. But she get worse and worse every day; so she won't be long chargeable on the parish. Not that she do cost much; for, the doctor say, she be past medicine, and she never hardly touch food."

"Do you know anything of her history?"

"History, your honour?—not I: she never do speak to any one, but sit as you see all day long. The doctor do say he suppose it be most easy to her chest."

Mr. Allen approached the object of their discourse. "You are very ill, I fear, my good woman?"

"Very," muttered the female, without moving her position.

"Are you in pain?"

"Not much;" but at that moment a violent fit of coughing brought drops of agony to her brow. As she removed her hands to wipe them off with her handkerchief, Mr. Allen had a full view of her face. The complaint of which she

was dying is not destructive to beauty, and, in the faded countenance before him, Mr. Allen beheld the wreck of features which could hardly have been less than extremely handsome, and now bore no marks of age, though the ravages of disease had there fallen with an unsparing hand.

"Poor thing! Have you no friend to whom you would like to apply? Where is your home?"

"In the grave," groaned the woman.

"There indeed is our place of rest—there will our bodies repose; but the spirit's home is in heaven."

"The spirit of the good!"

"Of the penitent also."

The unfortunate creature lifted up her eyes at these words, and fixed them keenly on Mr. Allen's face. They were eyes that once had contained in their glance that which claimed admiration and awe, and had still enough of expression left to interest. He drew a chair near his companion, in order the better to catch the tones of her voice should she be inclined to speak. She withdrew her gaze, however, and was silent.

"You have not passed through life, I fear,

devoid of offence: but we are all sinners,—and sinners as we are, pardon is promised to such as are truly penitent. I trust that I am addressing one who is aware of the divine truths; — who, whatever may have been the course of her life, does not now, with death so near at hand, hear for the first time of that blessed religion of which I am an unworthy minister."

"I am a Christian," said the female, raising her head and gazing a second time at him who addressed her.

"God be praised!" said the clergyman devoutly.

"Those truths you inculcate I was once instructed in: the threats and promises of the gospel I am well aware of." Then raising her voice to a pitch of wild energy which seemed supernatural in one so ill, she repeated—"'Woe unto them that draw iniquity with the cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart-rope! Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Therefore, as the fire devoureth the stub-

ble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.' Such are the denunciations of the Prophet, and they condemn me; and whilst the abject inhabitants of this house may yet be saved, I shall perish. Address them therefore, and not me: pour words of comfort into the bosoms of the poor, ignorant, weak, and bitterly tempted. Waste not your words on such as I am."

"Wretched woman! what have been your crimes? Speak; penitence may yet avail. Confess your sins to God, and by prayer endeavour to conciliate Him, who is ever ready to listen to the words of true contrition. Your humbled spirit, broken constitution, and abject poverty may plead in mitigation of your faults and punishment."

"If it were my wish to confess my sins, I could not," answered the female, laying her hand upon her chest. "*Here* is that to prevent me. With difficulty can my words be drawn from my wounded lungs: the few that I can utter shall be

yours. Accept my thanks for those of kindness you have spoken to me. They are far more than I deserve; but had they been still less, they would have been what I never expected to hear again from the voice of man."

"And has the world then used you so roughly," inquired Mr. Allen in a softened accent, "that such common sentiments as mine sound friendly? But tell me, though not your history, what you are: your language is far beyond your appearance and situation."

"Ask me not who I am. My name dies with me, and has long been dead to the world. But if you would know my history, take this"—drawing a packet from her bosom. "My object I cannot explain in wishing a memorial to remain of my wretched life. No pleasing, anxious existence do I resign; 'the warm precincts of the cheerful day' are nothing to me; I cast no 'longing, lingering look behind.' Yet I wrote that paper! When I am dead, read it—but only then. Nay, promise," she added more earnestly; "for, dying as I am, there is in that paper what would make you spurn me even from this wretched abode. When the sod has

been laid over me, then read my history, but not till then. Swear!"

"I promise," said Mr. Allen, as he took the packet from her hand. "But let me hope——"

His words were interrupted by the violent cough of his companion, who sank back exhausted under its force. Mr. Allen supported her. Her countenance assumed a ghastly hue, and the hand of death was on her! There was no one nigh to assist him! Laying her therefore gently on the floor, and supporting her head with his arm, a pause ensued of apparent ease to the sufferer. Immediate relief might yet avail; and the benevolent clergyman relinquishing his burthen, whom he placed with the utmost comfort the room could afford, flew to an adjoining apartment to find some one whom he could despatch for medical aid. No one was there; and in searching elsewhere for that object, some little time had elapsed. Alas! his anxiety was of no avail! Short as was his absence, during that time the unfortunate female had breathed her last!

Often, in after times, did Mr. Allen think of that wan, but, even in death, handsome counte-

nance, resting on the cold stone, and those small hands, clenched, not in prayer, but agony!

She was buried the following day. No tombstone marked the spot, no tear fell thereon. In the solitude and repose of his own study, Mr. Allen drew forth that evening the dying bequest of her whom he had so lately consigned to the grave, and read the following tale.

Whether the narrative was the wild effusion of a disordered imagination worked up into a belief of events which had no existence but in a poor maniac's brain, or that the truth and nothing but the truth was therein recorded, it was vain for Mr. Allen to speculate upon. For the honour of human nature he hoped the first was the case; but there was no reason to deny the possibility of the last.

Aurelia must now, however, speak for herself; and whether "she speaks this in the infirmity of her sense" or in veracity, must be gathered from her own words.

The Manuscript.

To say I was born the daughter of a gentleman sounds absurd; to say my education was that of a gentlewoman, my connexions affluent, my style of life independent, seems a vision even to myself—much more must it appear so to those who read this: and to such a vision it must be added, that my parents were rich and of ancient family, my place in society consequently amongst the first in the land, and that I opened my eyes beneath a roof which strangers journeyed miles to see. Alas! that eyes so opened, should close amidst the lowest of the low!

With a hand almost mouldering in the grave, the words of untruth are seldom written: sincerity is one of the rare merits a deathbed possesses, often giving the lie to a whole life. I trust that those into whose hands these pages may fall, will believe their contents, however my closing scene may make their truth doubtful.

I was named Aurelia, and was the youngest of a numerous family. The death of several children above my own age placed me in rather an isolated position with regard to my own family:

my youngest brother was several years older than myself, and my sisters were all older than my brothers. Upon my mother's death, my situation became still more isolated; but for some time I filled that very dubious place as to happiness—a *pet*. As I grew older, I became of greater dignity, and was promoted from the place of pet into that of general confidante. I was quite *au fait* of all my sisters' conquests and those of their friends; and had even some suspicions as to those of my brothers, but still stronger of their allowances being insufficient for their expenses.

My father was in the prime of life when my mother died. Everybody thought he would marry again, but he disappointed their expectations,—why, I cannot exactly say, and I often wondered he did not. My sisters, though good and amiable, were far from clever: their conversation was dull, and their intellects confined; whilst my father was a man of great vivacity, knowledge and taste. I adored him, and had no desire early in life but to live with him for ever, provided he was kind and fond of me. Of his kindness I had little to fear, as he was good-natured; but of his affections

I had my doubts, for his sensibilities were not acute. Generally amiable, easy to live with, an indulgent master, and though not a warm, yet a pleasing friend, he was universally popular, if not universally beloved. My sisters and brothers were a little afraid of him: he was a keen observer, and could detect a foible with an unsparing eye; indeed I think he saw the weaknesses of mankind quicker than their virtues or vices, and was more ready to forgive an error of the heart than the head. He did not dislike to imagine that he inspired awe, and was secretly pleased with the respect almost approaching to fear which it was evident my brothers and sisters felt for him; and although I had a mind much more in unison with his own, yet, from being perfectly at my ease with him, I was no longer his favourite. Such as I was, nevertheless, he was left to my society in my eighteenth year, by the marriage of all my sisters.

A report had gained considerable credit of my father paying attention to a young lady of great attractions in the City; which gave them such an alarm of a *belle mère*, that they all rushed into the state of matrimony, without much considering

the step they were taking, of which one, if not all, had leisure to repent when they saw no mother-in-law, but only myself, placed at the head of the establishment. My being so was not from any partiality on my father's part, but solely from his habit of letting things take their course; which rendered it more easy for me to sit at the head of his table than for the citizen's daughter, whom it was previously necessary to woo, win, and wed.

I would rather have had a *belle mère*, whatever might be the dignity I should lose thereby; for I should gain proportionably in freedom—and freedom was the ruling passion of my soul. I loved my sisters, but the intercourse subsisting between us was decidedly more reserved after their marriage. These alliances convinced me of two things: —first, that I should look well before I entered that state; and secondly, that whoever I might choose, my father would never object, after having so unhesitatingly connected himself with an Indian director, a poor baronet, and a low-born clergyman, who, though now a bishop, was then considered an enormous *mésalliance* for my sister.—

(When I look round this room and write these things, my pen drops from my hand — I a pauper, surrounded by vice, dirt, poverty, and starvation !) — To continue. I came out in the world. I was well-looking, though not so handsome as my sisters ; so of my beauty I thought little — of my wit I had a much keener perception. For what reason I know not, but I was more admired than any of my sisters had ever been, and, to use the hackneyed term, was the fashion. My father never despised the world's opinion, and he certainly liked me the better for its being favourable towards me ; and he looked with complacency on the herd of juvenile lords who were ever around me, nothing doubting that amongst them existed his future son-in-law.

Though of good and ancient family, my father was untitled, and, like many such, he had a secret, though unacknowledged respect for a peer of the realm ; which slight tinge of ambition in his composition my popularity had tended to arouse, and was expected to gratify. Had any of the titled gentlemen proposed, I know not what might have ensued ; but they did not : they admired, as is

a common case, but did not love. I neither admired nor loved them; but so cold did I then believe my nature, that I should very willingly have married any one of them for the sake of an establishment, had they done me the honour of proposing. Some real lovers I, however, had; and these I rejected — their consequence was not sufficient to compensate for my not caring for them.

My father only liked the society of dinners or clubs; I was therefore perfectly at liberty to choose my own chaperon. I had a cousin under very similar circumstances; we therefore went constantly out together, under the nominal protection of some married woman of the society — but whom, as we wanted neither patroness, guide, companion, nor pattern, we rarely saw for more than five minutes in the evening. Caroline's situation was different from my own — her admirers were much more serious in their attentions, for her fortune was large, whilst mine was at present doubtful and never could be much. She was a regular coquette—encouraged every one, but yet in secret cherished a decided partiality for one

many years older than herself,—Lord ——, whom she afterwards married.

I was very fond of my cousin, and her character diverted me. Being an object of less decided importance in the world than herself, I had frequent leisure to watch her proceedings, and would sometimes give myself up to cultivating such of her train as she had not ubiquity enough of person to attend to herself. One of these soon fell constantly to my share; for Caroline's whole powers as a coquette were devoted to turning the head of a consummate dandy, whose broken fortunes she insinuated her intentions of repairing by the gift of herself in marriage. This proceeding required no slight degree of art and wit: her desire was to prevent his proposal, yet to give the world an idea she only awaited his pleasure. That any other lover should persevere under such a state of things seemed surprising; and the constant attendance of a person whom I shall name Alfred was a degree of devotion I could not understand. He it was who, when none of my own friends were present, engaged ever in conversation with myself — though,

I must confess, to whomsoever his words were addressed, his eyes ever wandered after Caroline and her lover.

He was the only son of a man of small fortune, to which he succeeded early in life — just in time to make him abandon the law, the profession his father had chosen for him, and live on an income of about two thousand pounds a year. He was gentlemanlike, well-educated, good-tempered, and friendly in his manners. For a man who neither aspired to be a wit, a fine gentleman, nor a politician—who, though of good family and highly connected, was untitled, he was more generally liked and better received in society than any one I ever saw, and was a rare instance of a man being the fashion without effort, or without caring for it when bestowed: his honours, therefore, sat easy upon him. Without being handsome, his countenance was prepossessing; shrewd, yet mild; penetrating, yet good-natured. He was not loquacious; but when he did speak, his voice was of that deep, impressive kind, which it was impossible not to attend to: that identical voice which gave an interest and authority to his words, they could never

have otherwise commanded, and rendered the most commonplace observations pleasing and agreeable. He had read a great deal, but in a truly desultory and female style — being precisely that I most liked in a companion. On books, therefore, we often discoursed when waiting my cousin's pleasure at the Opera, or at parties, where she would ever linger to the last in her pleasing occupation of tormenting the prey she held at the end of her line.

Alfred's attendance was inexplicable, but of use to myself. As I was anything but a coquette, and very little of a flirt, I could not have commanded, on my own account, so constant an attendant; and it would have hurt my feelings to be indebted for my escort to the carriage to the vacant arm of my cousin's lover the dandy. Though not in precisely a straightforward shape, I was not displeased to have Alfred's entire services at my command, to beguile the time when I was weary, and escort me to the carriage in due form when my cousin would consent to return home.

Good God! to think of those days! Frivolous, unmeaning as they were, they were days of inno-

cence! I slept soundly, I prayed, and my evil passions were tranquil; if I had a distress, it was owing to the calmness of my life: the even current of my way appeared insipid,—the tranquil flow of a woman's career, too smooth for bliss. I regretted, as I then believed, that my passionless nature should deprive me of that fertile source of excitement—love! How little did I know myself!

My cousin's marriage was at length settled: the person—though it sounds like levity on my part, yet for want of a better designation I name the Dandy—was outrageous. The world were equally violent at one of their favourites being so jilted; and society, for a short time, was in a complete uproar on account of Caroline's ill behaviour and her victim's wrongs. Neither Caroline's nor the world's conduct was any surprise to me: I turned, however, to Alfred. He was mortified and disappointed as much as man could be: he was not, however, a man to vent his feelings in words; but, in a short note of leave-taking before he left London, he confessed to me that he had cherished the fondest hopes with regard to Caroline, founded more upon her indifference to ——

(naming the Dandy) than from any marks of preference she had bestowed upon him.

Thus we parted. I went into the country, where I became somewhat surprised at the manner in which thoughts of Alfred occupied my mind. I went through a rigid self-examination, and it was evident that Alfred interested me. I longed to know what he was about?—how were his spirits?—his health?—where his place of residence?—all questions I would willingly have had answered. I had been informed that my cousin's jilted lover had quitted England to exhale his disappointment in foreign lands. I began to think Alfred might have adopted a similar remedy for *his* wounds, and I started upon discovering the pain such an idea gave me. In the midst of my ruminations, however, upon Alfred, or rather upon myself, my father took a fancy to visit Brighton, where we found the very subject of my thoughts.

Alfred was exactly the sort of person to suit my father,—lively, not talkative. His ever ready silent smile made him an admirable listener; though that smile, I believe, had its origin from absence of

mind as much as from pleasure. Still it was a very creditable expression. I liked him for more genuine reasons, — his decided admiration of myself, and his constant attentions, now exclusively my own and for myself. My father's inclination for his society hourly increased, and he almost lived in our house during the six weeks we passed at Brighton.

On our return home, Sir Edmund —— visited us. He was just arrived in England from Italy: he was a person of great distinction in political as well as fashionable circles; and so remains, for his importance was founded upon a more substantial basis than artificial or ephemeral favour—that of his own merit. He was well-looking, extremely rich, highly connected, clever, amiable, and generous. His object in visiting my father proved to be myself; but it gave me no pleasure, no pride: my resolve was formed. His attentions obliged me to probe my feelings into their inmost recesses, and the satisfactory or melancholy result was, that I loved—Alfred! I did not love, however, without hope; for of Alfred's affection I felt tolerably secure.

His late flirtation with my cousin I disregarded entirely ; — of my father's sanction I made little doubt, and everything else was indifferent to me.

In London, where I next met Alfred, he was ever with me. My love was very evident ; and he in return was all attention, admiration, and gratitude. Every morning he called upon me ;— every evening almost he spent with us at home or abroad. He wrote—read the papers, and often a book, aloud to me as I worked in an apartment where he seemed as much at home as myself. I see the room now : the large French windows shaded by muslin curtains, and filled with the choicest flowers, scenting the air by their fragrance ; —the mirrors, china, pictures, silk hangings —— But what have such reminiscences to do with my story ? It cannot delay what I must confess :— the truth must be told ; it is for that I write. And why should I care for exposure ? I loved— I adored : Alfred was my idol !

My sisters tried to make me discourage his attendance, and to look with more favour upon Sir Edmund : but, as my father was perfectly passive, I followed my own career.

Alfred had spent the Christmas with us. After Easter we were to meet in London: anticipating that happy period, we parted. Before Easter, however, Sir Edmund arrived. He remained some time more devoted to me than ever, spite of my increasing coldness and almost open declaration that all society but that of Alfred was odious to me. Still he persisted till he placed me under the disagreeable necessity of rejecting the offer of his hand.

My sisters were wretched at my conduct,—the world astonished; for Sir Edmund's despair led him to betray a secret which my delicacy never would have revealed. I was very sorry to be the cause of distress to any one; but I certainly had never encouraged Sir Edmund: he had forced me to a decided refusal, and his disappointment had forced the knowledge upon the world. However, such being the case, I was rather glad Alfred should know how truly disinterested and constant my attachment was to himself.

We went to London, and had been there a week without hearing or seeing anything of Alfred. That illness was the cause I was assured, and was

wretched. Out of spirits and restless, I accompanied Caroline and her husband one evening to the opera. Lord L—— was a man whose whole conversation consisted in quizzing; the sameness and insipidity of which wearied me to death, as he ran on in the customary strain. A large red ungloved arm, covered with a profusion of bracelets, and the fingers with rings, which hung over the front of a box on the opposite side of the house, particularly attracted his attention and excited his wit.

All his jokes would have been heard with the usual indifference on my part, had I not intercepted a most expressive glance from his wife, which attracted far more my eye than his lordship's words my ear. Of course I made no observation, but turned towards the object which had occasioned it; where I beheld, or thought I beheld, by the side of the ponderous owner of the rings and bracelets — Alfred! I started. He moved to the other side of the box, and I was left doubtful of his identity.

When we were leaving the house and waiting for our carriage, a violent outcry was heard of

"Mrs. Pemberton's carriage stops the way!" The cry was repeated, but no one appeared; and as the carriage did not draw off, no one could move; and very general was the dissatisfaction at Mrs. Pemberton's tardiness: even Caroline I heard say to her husband, "So we are to wait all night this odious little heiress's pleasure." He shrugged contemptuously in reply. A moment after, however, Mrs. Pemberton appeared. It was the interest of every one to let her pass; so a broad channel was formed, through which sailed the identical owner of the fat arm and bracelets; which fat arm, equally massive from nature and art, to my utter surprise rested on that of Alfred. Mrs. Pemberton was not, however, his only charge. On his other arm hung what had almost the air of a heap of costly sable; but which was, in truth, the figure of a short slight female, enveloped like an inhabitant of Lapland.

I certainly was not of a jealous disposition; "trifles light as air" were nothing to me. Stubborn facts however, made, I believe, the greater impression. I was surprised, but not angry; and longed to meet Alfred, that we might discuss

these his new acquaintances. But days, weeks passed on and we did not meet. I was no longer uneasy about his health, and prepared for a ball, with the assurance that he must be there. I was dancing when he entered; and at the conclusion of the dance, got my partner to convey me to that part of the room where Alfred was. As I approached he moved away, and I saw him join the newly forming set with a fair, richly-attired, plain girl, whom I did not recognise as the sable companion of the opera; but upon inquiring her name, and being told, "Miss Pemberton," I identified the young lady.

When the dance was over, I looked upon Alfred's joining me as a certainty, and having declined dancing, awaited his approach: but no; he replaced his partner by the side of her mother, conversed with them for a few moments, and having shaken hands with the young lady, glided out of the room, without again appearing therein.

That something was wrong I felt assured. Every probable cause I reviewed in my mind. I thought of illness, madness, jealousy, money embarrassments, the interference of friends; any-

thing but the truth. I had been now six weeks in London, and knew nothing more of Alfred, and was wretched. His horses and groom, all familiar to my eyes, I saw constantly waiting at a door in Grosvenor-street. I imagined he had changed his abode, and lived there; but accidentally looking into the Court Guide, I discovered it to be the house of *Mrs. Pemberton!* Still I was not undeceived.

It is useless to dwell on the subject. Alfred's marriage with Miss Pemberton was declared. My friends dreaded my sorrow,—Alfred, my anger. Sir Edmund rejoiced in the change my sentiments must undergo. They were all mistaken. The intelligence produced a fever which soon flew to the brain, and my speedy death appeared to bid fair towards relieving them all from their separate hopes and fears.

How can I relate my subsequent history! How begin upon it! And yet, its nature is more in unison with present appearances, more suited to my present character, and to my hardened mind. What I have written has given but a faint idea of my character. Few people know themselves,

and in that respect I do not affect greater wisdom than others. But little as I was aware of my own character, others were still less so. I was born capable of strong attachments, and I had no one to love. Loving no one, I imagined myself cold and unfeeling. My father did not want love;—he liked good breeding, good fellowship, and good nature. My sisters gave their love to their husbands and their children: they were not women of strong feelings, however, and that they should love anything was more surprising than that their affection should be doled out to me with a very sparing hand. My brothers loved their horses and their dogs.

To secure a friend in marriage seemed my best chance, and I entered life determined to be captivated. I was mistaken. I liked no one. Clever I thought myself, and I read the minds of men in their faces—a word seemed to lay their breasts open to my view as if by magic, and no one pleased me. I was convinced that I was passionless, cold as stone, and indifferent. This opinion yielded to Alfred's acquaintance. Why? I have described him;—no, not described him, for till too

late I never knew him: I who valued myself upon my insight into character was deceived in the very instance where deception was destruction. Be it as it may, I adored Alfred. Love, they say, is a parenthesis in life, perfectly unconnected with, and disjoined from, all that influences every other motive, feeling, taste, or desire.

I was perfectly happy; secure the day would arrive when I should be his, and that the evening of our lives would flow on serenely together. I delighted in the generosity of my proceeding: it must bind Alfred by the strongest ties, for in marrying him I should resign all the wealth and consequence every one knew I could command from the love of Sir Edmund. How absurd were all my reasonings, when grounded on the feelings of a man who, with all my wisdom, was far beyond my comprehension! The prevailing feature in the character of him I worshipped as an idol of perfection was *avarice*; the quality of all others so perfectly odious in my eyes, that I hardly thought ill enough of any one to imagine it could be his master passion, or even have place but in the vilest bosoms. Yet my acquaintance with

Alfred originated in his attendance on my cousin, a girl of fortune. But she had beauty, and was a coquette ever laying snares for the unwary; and I weakly imagined Alfred followed her from deference to her personal charms, or from her apparent deference to his. Fool that I was!

Weeks following weeks passed away, and I knew nothing. When first my reason returned, it was in a situation inexplicable as it was extraordinary. I found myself rapidly descending a river of some importance, the banks of which, lit by the bright beams of the moon, showed a romantic, and to me unknown country. I lay at the bottom of a boat enveloped in a coarse cloak. Two men were my companions; the one young, robust, with a determined air and manner; the other older, but not less athletic, and more gentle in his demeanour.

From their conversation, I soon gathered that they had saved me from a watery grave. A confused idea now arose in my mind of having been much in a carriage within a few days, as if performing a journey, but with whom I could not

remember. I had also a more vivid notion of a room on the ground-floor, and of escaping through an open window to the banks of a large river, which I discerned winding its course by the bright moonlight; but whether accident or design had precipitated me therein, it was impossible for me to connect my ideas sufficiently to know. The result, however, was evident. My senses were revived; the shock had cooled the fever of my brain, and restored my reason to a full knowledge of the wretch I was!

The men continued their conversation. "After all," said the younger, "I believe it would have been just as well to have left the poor thing in the water: if she dies we shall have the devil to pay—as much fuss as about that confounded boy who was missing, and for whom, to this hour, I am suspected of having forestalled the hangman's office—for which handsome opinion I am indebted to Parson —— (naming my brother-in-law), and for which favour, trust me, I will repay him some day."

"I am never sorry to be of use to a woman," replied his companion. "If I had not seen her

long hair floating on the water, the body might have lived or died for what I care ; but I cannot, for the life of me, turn away a helping hand from a woman. When you get such a wife as my Kate, you will think the same, Jack ; she has stuck by me in good report and bad report, fair weather and foul, never flinching, never murmuring !"

"I wish, with all my heart, your Kate was here; she has ever got some cure for broken heads and bruised bodies, so she might try her skill on a drowned suicide ; for it was no chance cast that young thing in the water."

"A glass of brandy will be as good as any of Kate's remedies."

"Ay, some of the right sort—of the last run; that will kill or cure, I 'll be bound. Either way will be of use."

I had now, however, power to speak, and moaned forth a few words of thanks for the kindness I had received at the hands of my preservers. Eager inquiries were now made as to whence I came —my name—my abode. In return, I only implored that they would carry me where they were

going, and that when more recovered I would tell them further. The men consented, and explained that their abode was yet far off, to which I replied, "so much the better;" for after having, as I feared, attempted self-destruction, and certainly having been deprived of reason, I had no wish to face my own family; and as to any one else the world contained, I regarded them all with horror: my wish was never again to see a human face I had before known—and a sensation of pleasure almost crept through my veins at the idea of chance having so far assisted my desires by throwing me with my present companions. After a little time the men took to their oars, and guided our boat from the river up a tributary stream, where the trees arching over our heads obscured the dim light we had hitherto enjoyed, and frequently impeded our progress, the branches occasionally bending into the centre of the water. The men, however, seemed accustomed to, and prepared for, every impediment, and guided their bark with much dexterity as far as the depth of the stream allowed. We landed; when, observing I walked with difficulty, the younger man

took me by the arm, and supported me up a winding path to the door of a small dwelling. In a moment we were within, and I found myself in the presence of a tall, respectable-looking female, a blazing fire on the hearth, and an appearance of cleanliness and even comfort around, as surprising as that I should form a part of the scene.

All that was known of me was speedily told; —the woman regarded me with a keen glance, but had the humanity not to ask me any questions. Bed was evidently the only place for me, and to that I was hastily hurried, and Kate having administered a composing draught, left me to the enjoyment of the most profound repose. I awoke perfectly well, and without a shade of mental delusion—all my former life was open to me—my folly, misery, and disgrace. It was with a feeling of wild delight I anticipated the possibility of concealing my existence, and never mixing with the world more. I had full time to arrange my thoughts before the mistress of the mansion appeared.

"You have had a good sleep," said she; "I

have looked in upon you pretty often, and always found you fast locked. Well, it was not for me to be surprised; I knew the efficacy of what I administered last night—a good sleep does wonders. Now, my dear, you shall drink some tea, and then I expect to hear a little of your story; those rings on your fingers, and that fine chain on your neck, betoken gentle blood, if not gentle fortunes,—at least I would fain hope they are no proofs of the contrary. Well, well, do not weep; if it was calamity hurried you into those waves from whence my husband extricated you, better days may arrive; while there is youth there is hope—it is only for such as me to resign its delusions."

"However rude," I answered, "the world may have proved, and however I may have used or abused its moments of sunshine, I still retain a sense of gratitude, and can yet feel all your and your husband's kindness."

The woman smiled. "I am glad you are satisfied; but as I do not wish you to judge better or worse of us than we deserve, I will be frank with you as to our profession—rather more

enterprising than honest, I fear — we are smugglers."

I had imagined as much, and was not therefore surprised at the discovery, though rather so at the easy way in which it was communicated.

"It is a rough trade," continued Kate with a sigh, as she quitted the room; but when she returned with some of the best tea I ever tasted, I felt the profession had its individual if not general advantages.

Beneath the smuggler's roof, and by the attention of his wife, I recovered my health, and first premeditated the crime I have since accomplished. The reason so miraculously restored I had no desire to use but for the accomplishment of one object.

It was necessary to procure me some wearing apparel, to obtain which I put into the old smuggler's hands my rings, &c. These he refused to sell, as they might excite suspicion; but he advanced me some money upon them, with which I obtained what I wished—the attire of a man!

My hosts were grown so partial to me in the few days I had been with them, that they made

not the slightest objection to the transformation they witnessed; and were equally indulgent to my earnest request that they would never mention the circumstances under which they found me, or inquire my story.

The younger man, on taking his departure, took with him my valuables, and disposed of them so advantageously, that I was enabled to repay my hosts and to become their regular boarder.

Strange as it may seem, I was not unhappy; I employed myself in working in the garden all day, eat my simple food with pleasure, and slept soundly at night. Had I forgotten Alfred? No; nor did I intend it; but I loved him no longer: bitter, bitter hatred was my feeling towards him; and in the calm retreat where I now dwelt, amongst the most beautiful scenes of nature, where the voice of discord never reached me, and nothing living disturbed my wanderings, where the heavens smiled on one of the most lovely and peaceful landscapes that ever painter or poet imagined, did I meditate revenge!

Little did my hosts imagine my feelings—little

could they understand them. They had met ill usage, the world's frowns and its scorn; they had suffered wrongfully, and, reduced to poverty by knavery, were driven by dire necessity to their present mode of life; yet they seldom complained. Why should they?—they possessed what was a breastplate of strength against the malice of fortune—mutual love! What mattered to them whether poverty, obscurity, or misfortune in any shape overtook them, provided their affection were undiminished! Compared with the many, they were happy.

By what means I did not exactly ascertain, but newspapers frequently crept into our retirement. They were eagerly perused by the smuggler, who imparted their contents to his more tranquil partner, who no longer clung, even in that remote degree, to a world she had deserted, or which had deserted her. He evidently could and did muse on days that were gone, and possibly dreamt of their return; not so his wife. She had more refinement, and, I suspect, came of gentle blood; her education had not been neglected, and there was probably one thing she thought time could never restore—

a good name. With a blasted character she felt her present abode was their best security for happiness, or at least for freedom from mortification. Through the channel of these newspapers I knew that Alfred was married, and that the event took place on the day after my death was announced in them. This supposed event was recorded minutely, and it was imagined that the body was washed to the sea by the force of the current and tide. No wild surmise either, as such would certainly have been the case but for the interposition of the smugglers. The fact of my having destroyed myself rested, according to the paper, on my bonnet and shawl being found floating on the water, and the marks of my footsteps remaining on the sand by the edge of the river.

I quitted the last friends I possessed in the world, and became a wanderer — my kind hosts actually shed tears at my departure!

I wandered to ——, in the neighbourhood of which town Alfred had a house. I there heard that he wanted a groom boy: for a woman I rode remarkably well, and, unlike a woman, I un-

derstood the management, temper, and merits of horses. I applied for the place, and to my surprise was immediately accepted by a respectable-looking head groom who had lived with Alfred's father. My looks were in my favour, and my seat on horseback such as his master would approve of —and I the very lad, to all appearance, whom he would like for his particular attendant when on horseback; I was therefore actually a member of Alfred's family!

The place where I dwelt was Alfred's in right of his wife; he had never been there, but they were both shortly expected. As he was a perfect stranger to the greater part of his household, I heard frequent speculations respecting his probable conduct as a master, which occasionally excited my smiles, but more often my disgust.

Alfred at length arrived—he appeared at church, where I saw him seated by the side of his wife in his crimson-lined pew. I never saw them together again, for I went no more to church, though my mistress sent me a sharp message to induce my attendance.

My place was to ride behind Alfred — what

my feelings were when I first led the horses to the door, and held the stirrup for him to mount, it would be impossible to describe — they regarded the future far more than the past — and, as I galloped after him over hill and dale, I looked upon him, not as the once-loved Alfred, but as the hated husband of Miss Pemberton !

One day I had attended him to pay a visit to a neighbouring squire — on leaving the house, by the door of which I had been some time waiting, he was accompanied so far by the owner of the mansion; and I was desired to bring the horse I was riding forward for his inspection.

" He is a clever creature, is he not ?" said Alfred. " I intend him to carry my wife."

The friend smiled.

" You do not think him fit to carry a lady ?"

" Oh ! far from it — he is perfect, I make no doubt: but married ladies seldom ride — you understand me — ha, ha, ha !" Alfred frowned. " A nervous head-achy sort of ride — I know the thing — and then the horse put by again for some

months. I am up to the whole affair, as the father of twelve children well may be."

"So it seems," said Alfred contemptuously, vaulting on his saddle. "I congratulate you on your experience — good morning!" — and away he flew. Alfred's displeasure was evident, but it was no gratification to me — it was the vulgar style, so foreign to his taste, which brought a scowl to his brow, not the matter of the discourse.

Several guests visited Alfred, and amongst others, Sir Edmund ——!

I was satisfied at being where I was, promoting as it did the object for which I lived; it was therefore annoying to discover that I was not popular among the servants. I never opened my lips to any of them if I could avoid it, and when not at my business, sought solitude, often at the expense of my meals. This conduct was displeasing to them, and I feared, notwithstanding the favour of the head groom, that I might be obliged to yield to the general feeling and abandon my place. In this emergency I bethought me, and made use of what certainly had been highly cultivated for a

very different purpose — a good voice. Not that my vocal powers were by any means first-rate — but a low impressive voice had been formerly much admired, more so than my actual powers merited. Now, however, I had talent enough and to spare, as far as my present audience was concerned; and in ballads and popular airs I first felt my way towards their good graces. I put simple words to Italian music, and sang them in as simple a manner. The tide of popularity instantly turned — and for the sake of a song, the men ceased to be offended that I did not swear, drink, or cheat my master, and the women were better satisfied at my want of gallantry and conversation.

The encouragement my vocal powers had received, made some air or another to be constantly passing in my mind, so much so, that those who heard me could have hardly imagined a bird more blithe than myself; but my gaiety was mechanical. I sang, I slept, I moved, but my ultimate *object* was never absent from my mind. One day, however, as I was thus occupied, Sir Edmund accompanied Alfred in his visit to the stables; and the air with which I apparently

lightened my labours as they entered was that of "La ci darem la mano."

"The march of intellect indeed!" said Alfred, "a groom-boy performing his work to an air of Mozart's!"

"It is not the music which excites my attention," observed Sir Edmund with a sigh—"it is the voice itself. Did you never hear one like it? You cannot have forgotten that of Aurelia!—Poor Aurelia!"

"Very true," said Alfred, hastily, "there is some resemblance. Aurelia's was rather a vulgar style, so it is not surprising."

"Vulgar! Say rather superior! as was all she did."

"I know *you* thought so. I wonder she did not return the compliment, you were so great an admirer of hers. Here Bob, bring out Whitefoot—and how is the black mare's back?"

Well did I note this conversation, and well did Alfred repay the injurious manner in which he had spoken of *me*.—How different from his friend! Strange infatuation! Sir Edmund, in personal appearance, was as far superior to Alfred as he was in mental qualifications; for his talents I

had never scrupled to give him greater credit than to the other — but the superiority of Alfred rested, as *I* imagined, in the *heart!* Had he at that moment shown any symptom of feeling whatsoever, I might have relented; but as it was, my hatred and revenge gained fresh aliment from his cold words and disgusting manner, so strongly contrasted with the feeling Sir Edmund betrayed — and yet the latter I had despised for such as Alfred!

It was not love for his wife made him forget me — to her he was civil and attentive, but, as every servant in the house well knew, perfectly indifferent. It would appear as if she were equally so, for their marriage had been entirely one of convenience.

Odious as it was to gain information through such means, yet by an open letter which fell into a housemaid's hands, we were all let into the secret of Mrs. Pemberton's sentiments on the subject; therein she warmly objected to her daughter staying so much in the country as her husband appeared inclined she should do — that having married for situation, she ought to make good her claims as a

woman of fashion in London, where, through her husband's name, and her own wealth, she might act a distinguished part, if guided by her, and drive from the field all the old leaders of *ton*.

Whilst such were the schemes of mother and daughter, I was well aware of an incipient flirtation with a gamekeeper's pretty daughter on the part of the husband. The fair damsel could not read, — messages were therefore the customary mode of communication when separated, which I had the honour to convey. Alfred was evidently pleased with the alacrity and discretion I displayed. Little did he dream that I hated him too much to abuse him, and that in ascertaining his profligacy I read my own folly, blindness, and madness.

But the catastrophe approaches, and must be written. I was one day wandering in a wood two miles from the house, when I unexpectedly encountered Alfred. He was accompanied by two dogs, and had a gun in his hand: calling to me haughtily, he asked, what mischief I was after?

"Gathering nuts," I answered shortly.

"Rather, breaking my trees," said Alfred. "But since you are here, you may make yourself useful by putting those two dogs into couples, who have been tormenting me for the last two hours, and now they may torment each other."

I did not like dogs, and, indeed, being somewhat afraid of them, I began to execute the orders I had received in a very dilatory manner; however, I laid hold of one as if about to execute my task. Angry at my slowness, Alfred called me some harsh name, and telling me to hold his gun, said that he would couple the dogs himself. The gun was in my hand, loaded and cocked. Alfred stood a few paces from me. No one was near. Silence and solitude reigned around!

"Alfred!" I exclaimed in my natural tone of voice. He started.

"Who calls?"

"Aurelia!"

"Aurelia, what mean you?" And he looked around, as if some one besides ourselves were present.

"There is no one here but myself," I said calmly, "and your own conscience. Why

should the name of Aurelia make you start? Aurelia is dead. She died mad; and you will follow her! Death awaits you!"

"*You* are mad, young man," exclaimed Alfred, "as I shall speedily give you ample proofs, by consigning you to a lunatic asylum. How came you to know anything about Aurelia?"

"I am Aurelia!"

"You!—Folly! She is dead!"

"No, no, no, no!" I exclaimed wildly, and in a voice that seemed to echo from every side around. "She lives for vengeance!"

"Wretched maniac, if indeed you are Aurelia, give me the gun and quit my presence. How dare you haunt my dwelling?

"How dare *I!*"

"Give me the gun!"

"Never! It is the weapon of my revenge."

Alfred sprang forward, with the intention of wresting it from my grasp. He held it in his hand. The piece exploded! He lay dead at my feet! I gazed at his altering countenance a moment, then throwing the gun down by his side, I retreated quietly—I regained the house,

and seating myself by the hall-fire, remained some time gazing on the flames, undisturbed by any one. Suddenly, confusion seemed to reign around; bells rang violently; voices were heard, some loud, others subdued and fearful; — screams, — tears ensued. I well knew the cause!

Splendid was the procession attending Alfred's remains to the tomb, and splendid the monument which marked where he slept; and beautiful the inscription engraved thereon by his disconsolate widow, bearing testimony to his virtues, accidental death, and her own despair! Well did the marble tears of the sculptured angels accord with the memorial over which they bent, recording a wife's affliction, who in her weeds found a second husband—a man's virtues who by his deceitful conduct had driven a woman mad—and his accidental death, which was—— murder!

CHAPTER II.

The sorrows and the crimes of Aurelia slept in the cold grave; a grave which, in a few weeks, the rank and rapid vegetation of a church-yard had almost obliterated from the view of any casual observer; but its mouldering tenant still dwelt in the memory of one. Mr. Allen possessed at home that which for ever recalled her to his mind, and a sigh, not unmingled with a feeling of horror, would often escape him when his eye fell upon the cabinet wherein was deposited her fearful tale.

Like that of many of his profession, Mr. Allen's life, though one of deep interest, was little enlivened by society; for that which had once cheered his home was a tale of other times, many years having elapsed since the wife of his

early affections, and the friend of his maturer age, had been removed to another and a better world. She had been as the light of the sun to his house, which, when departed, no second tie had ever replaced. Mr. Allen continued his career in solitude, and, but for his profession, it would have been in sadness also; that profession however was too important, and too engrossing, not to engage deeply his well-constituted mind. Although society was now closed to him, yet the charms of social intercourse had once been freely opened to him in the friendship of a family which, for many generations, had been of the greatest importance in the parish where he dwelt. That friendship was now at an end; for though multiplied as it had been by numbers, all and every one of whom Mr. Allen had regarded as brothers or children, yet time had removed them, if not from the world, still far from his knowledge. The last parent stem, he who had survived wife, children, and even children's children, Mr. Allen's original friend, patron and contemporary, was shortly subsequent to the opening of this tale gathered to his fathers. He

died "full of years and virtue," and to him succeeded a young man who, educated abroad by his widowed mother, was unknown to his family and native place. Now, however, the simple inhabitants of —— thought he could not but return home to live where his fathers had lived, and to do as his fathers had done. Even Mr. Allen, better versed in human nature, was not much less sanguine in his hopes, and almost as much disappointed, when, after a year had passed in anxious expectation, a letter did arrive from the owner of Nevil Place. The hand-writing was *un*-English; the date was "Palazzo Grande — Piano terzo, Piazza ——, Florence," and the contents were to give notice that Nevil Place was to be let. Deeply grieved, and almost hurt were the good people of —— at the announcement, "To be let!" They murmured one to another, "Nevil Place to be let! Is it come to this! the world is at a sad pass indeed!"

If such were their feelings at the intelligence, what would they have felt had they known that as he wrote the words "*to be let*," the youthful lord of Nevil Place uttered a secret malediction upon

the law of entail which prevented his substituting "*to be sold.*" The house was rather out of repair, and the situation remote; but it possessed one great and intrinsic merit,—the purity of the air was such that a tenant was speedily found; and to the surprise of his "Eccellenza Il Signor Nevil," tidings reached him in his third floor of the Palazzo Grande, that the Earl of Studland had taken Nevil Place for a term of years; but as Mr. Nevil's surprise is of little moment, we shall leave him and turn to that of Mr. Allen, who, equally delighted with his parishioners, hailed the arrival of a nobleman in whose countenance beamed gentleness, intellect, and benevolence. Lord Studland, however, was in indifferent health, and it was at his physician's recommendation that he became the tenant.

The arrival of such a person was a general blessing to all. Nevil Place had been now uninhabited for a year, and many another hearth had been cheerless or desolate in consequence; many a tattered robe and wan cheek had his Eccellenza of the Palazzo Grande to answer for. He who now filled his place, however, had a heart to feel as

well as a hand to relieve the distresses of those around him : as far as he was concerned, the good gifts Providence had blessed him with were not bestowed in vain. Mr. Allen also, in a more refined sense, benefited by Lord Studland's presence, and in his society a wet and gloomy winter wore away, if not gaily, at least agreeably.

The difference in station between Lord Studland and Mr. Allen was not greater than the difference between their respective ages; for the former was in the very prime of life. No symptom of age was yet visible; though he was serious and at times melancholy; yet such, alas! are often the accompaniments of youth, even as in Lord Studland's case, with wealth, rank, and popularity.

It could not be health alone which affected his spirits, for that hourly improved; nor could it be the retirement in which he dwelt, for that, Mr. Allen well knew, was his own choice. The physician had only marked the county in which he wished his lordship to winter; but the spot had been fixed upon by himself.

The increased severity of the winter was not unfelt in the somewhat decayed mansion of Nevil

Place, and the small study of its last possessor became at length almost the only room of the present inmate. One evening shortly after this arrangement Mr. Allen arrived to dinner, and was shown into the study. Lord Studland was not there, and his guest had time to bestow a scrutinizing look around the well-known apartment. It was much altered, not to say improved, by modern comforts and modern arrangements; still former reminiscences made many an ancient friend to be regretted, who was either entirely displaced, or pushed into obscurity by some more costly upstart of recent invention in furniture. As thus he gazed, his eye fell on a miniature picture, which in a rich frame rested on a desk opposite to the chair Lord Studland usually occupied. It was that of a female; the portrait completely diverted Mr. Allen's thoughts from past and present friends, from all and everything but the resemblance the picture bore to one whom he had once seen, and, having seen, never could forget. Mr. Allen had actually conveyed it into his hand, and was holding the portrait to the light when his host entered; and so engrossed was he with the

contemplation, that, till he spoke, he was unaware of his presence. When, however, he was so, with many apologies to his lordship for the liberty he had taken, he replaced the picture on the desk, adding, "It was those eyes, my lord, that drew my regards; they are so like those of a person whom I once saw—"

"They may be like," replied Lord Studland coldly, "but you never could have seen the original of that picture. She is now, alas! dead; but I am certain that when living, she never could have been near this place."

"It must be so; but still I could fancy anything when I gaze at that picture; — I could believe, nay, declare . . . ." But whatever Mr. Allen was inclined so solemnly to pronounce he did not utter; blushing at his own earnestness he again seized the picture, and carrying it to the light commenced a renewed examination of its features.

"It is no secret for whom that miniature was intended: the original was Miss Berrington; her father is the owner of Berrington Castle in Monmouthshire. The interest I felt for her induced

a near relation to present me with that picture; it is a striking resemblance, and so much so, that to confess my weakness, it is not every day that I dare look at it, and very seldom that I can speak of her as calmly as I now do."

"I am not in the least surprised," said Mr. Allen; "but her name is perfectly unfamiliar to me. I may perhaps have once seen a print of Berrington Castle, but I never heard its possessor named."

When dinner was over, and the two gentlemen again seated by the study fire, the clergyman's eyes still wandered towards the picture. "I shall be assuredly jealous," said Lord Studland smiling. "You are evidently too much attracted by the charms of my poor companion; I must be careful in future how I leave you in the room alone with her, if I am not absolutely obliged in consequence to put her under lock and key."

"I almost wish you would, my lord, for the interest, and perhaps curiosity, which that painting creates, is positively painful. I long to know the history of those eyes; they did not pass

through the world blamelessly, I fear: they are to me as if they foretold the nature of 'a tragic volume.' I am probably mistaken."

"Far, very far from it. You judge truly of the story of her before us. The evening is too much advanced for me to relate the tale at present; but another time, when we draw our chairs to this fire, you shall hear what I have to tell as regards Miss Berrington."

A few days after the foregoing conversation, Lord Studland related as follows:—

"From my earliest years I had been intimate at Berrington Castle, and the youngest daughter of its owner, even as a child, excited in me a warmth of interest which, as she grew older, ripened into a stronger feeling; and when she had attained her sixteenth year I did not wish to conceal from myself that I loved. That I did not then avow my passion and demand her hand, arose from my mother: she entreated me to have patience, and even recommended absence, and unhesitatingly pointed out to me the possible evils

of the connexion I wished to form. I neither did nor could deny the truth of what my mother advanced in disapprobation ; but at the same time I felt that the very imperfection of her I loved, was the origin of my interest. The education of Miss Berrington had been nearly nominal ; for, notwithstanding governesses and teachers innumerable, she was completely the child nature had formed her. Her father saw in his steward's annual accounts, 'To the Miss Berringtons' music-master, drawing-master, governess's salary, &c. &c.'. various considerable sums applied, and was perfectly satisfied his duty was accomplished ;—as satisfied as was the governess that she did hers, whilst, in correcting the exercises of her pupils with one hand, she held in the other "The Sorrows of Werther," or, in hearing read the usual number of pages of history, wrote, at intervals, heads of a monthly letter to a lover in the Indies, a chain of whose sandy hair, to the infinite amusement of her pupils, she wore, with much ostentatious sentiment, entwined around her saffron throat. To be educated, or not, was therefore entirely Miss Berrington's own affair, and

that she preferred information to ignorance was a matter entirely between herself and her own conscience. The regulation of her mind she knew nothing of: as nature had formed it, so it continued. She was therefore self-willed; with an uncontrollable spirit, she had strong unregulated feelings, and talents and wit to make her view with contempt those with whom she chiefly associated. She was beautiful, lively, generous, and capable of strong affections. I saw all her faults as well as perfections; but I was convinced that with proper care the first might be eradicated, whilst the last would flourish and increase. I longed to be her guide and protector, but my mother's entreaties prevailed, and I quitted England. "In two years," she said, "you will have proved the strength or weakness of your affection, and Miss Berrington's character will be more decidedly formed."

* * * *

"Amongst other ceremonies which attract the curiosity of Protestant strangers abroad, is that of receiving the veil. It was with no small interest, therefore, that I attended the chapel of the

Convent of St. Cecilia in Rome, to witness the taking of the vow by a nun of that convent. My place was by accident very near the bride, as she is almost in mockery termed; and resplendent with jewelry and dress, I thought I never beheld a more lovely female. She was not absolutely in her first youth, and the traces of care were on her brow; but her features were perfect, and her form symmetry itself. She looked melancholy, but resigned. I understood she was rich and independent, and that the cloister was her own free choice.

"As I was turning to leave the church, my attention was drawn towards a person in plain attire, but with evident marks of gentle blood, who appeared dreadfully affected by the service just concluded, and leaning against a pillar gave way to almost convulsive sobs. She was alone, and seemed almost to be ready to faint. Common humanity induced me to stop and inquire if I could in any way assist her; and as the crowd were pouring out of the church, I recommended her to take my arm and gain the outward air as soon as possible. She consented; and upon our reaching the portico of the church turned to thank

me for my assistance; but the moment her eye fell upon my face, she exclaimed with a look of horror—'You are English?—The saints protect me! I have sworn the most solemn vow to have no communication with them. Holy Virgin, pardon me, and save me from the evil of having touched a heretic—a man of deceit! But perhaps I may yet be mistaken—what are you?'

"I mentioned in reply the name I then bore.

"'It is, then, too true;' said my companion. 'I thank you for your attention, but leave me: and if you knew the reason I have to abhor your countrymen, you would excuse me.'

"'You surely should not judge of a whole country by a few bad specimens?'

"'I judge by only one. You have witnessed this morning's ceremony—you have seen her who has this day commenced a living death—and why is it thus, but for the specious arts of one of your own odious countrymen! With manner soft as that of an infant, with eyes all tenderness, and heart all ice, and cold as his own climate!—him did Leonora love with an ardour you northerns know not, and her reward—is the cloister!'

"I attempted to inquire further, but my companion had impatiently signed for a carriage to approach, and, before I could offer further assistance, had flown therein.

"I was not slow to discover the history of Leonora: it was an odious tale. About twelve months previously to my arrival in Rome, a young Englishman of family, though not of rank, and of good, but not splendid means, was attacked by a fever, and for some time was in imminent danger. In the same palace wherein he lodged, resided also the Countess Leonora ——; she felt interested in his fate, and showed him great kindness under his misfortune. Upon his recovery he expressed himself with the most unbounded gratitude, and from that moment was devoted to the Countess's society. Weeks, months moved on; the lady and her lover were inseparable, and it was generally believed that the only drawback to their union was difference of religion; her uncle, a cardinal high in favour with the sovereign pontiff, making the Englishman's conversion the basis of his consent. Such at least were the reports in

Rome, and, being uncontradicted by those most interested, they gained hourly more credit.

"The month of May had arrived; every one was leaving the south; and amongst others the lovely, though no longer youthful Countess of C—— arrived in Rome on her way from Naples to England, accompanied by her two daughters and a whole train of the *élite* of the male society, foreigners as well as English. The lover of Leonora and the Countess of C—— met; she rallied him on his passion, talked with him over old tales of England, and of one whom he had flirted with formerly, rich and still unmarried; offered him the vacant place in her carriage; was witty on the subject of Italian wives, and mock Italian greatness, and actually concluded by carrying off the lover of the passionate, tender-hearted Leonora from his devoted mistress, with no other word of explanation than a letter of adieu! The feelings of the unfortunate Leonora have been shown, and after weeks of intense suffering she abandoned the world!

"This story made a deep impression upon my

mind, and I resolved within myself that the delinquent was one to shun and to caution others against.

"At length I returned to England. Miss Berrington, who had now been some time out in society, received me with cordiality, and her father with something more, and I found myself established in the house upon the footing of former days. Although Miss Berrington received my attentions, they were evidently indifferent to her, and my only hope rested in the fact of her appearing equally so to all, and that, admired as she was, none of her admirers wore the semblance of lovers. Of this hope, however, I was soon deprived.

"One evening at a large and crowded assembly I wandered into a retired boudoir for the sake of refreshment of air, and, as I thought, solitude. I was mistaken. An open window certainly admitted the first from a balcony filled with fragrant plants; near it was standing Miss Berrington; her back was turned towards me, but of the countenance of her companion I had the most

complete view. Miss Berrington was speaking earnestly, and as earnestly did he whom she addressed appear to listen. Never had we met before, but I knew him directly: those large half downcast eyes, as if stealthily fixed on the face of her who spoke, the bland smile, the smooth brow indicative of peace and kindness to all—alas, how falsely! — showed him at once to be Leonora's perfidious lover. And how did I then see him! in familiar discourse with her most likely to suffer by his wiles; with her, whom with my life I would have guarded from his acquaintance. I remained some time; they still continued talking and laughing; at length I retired unheeded. I could not be entirely passive. The next time we met I spoke with asperity to Miss Berrington of her friend. I was pitied, in return, for the delusions of a jealous fancy, and was consequently silenced.

"I found that the attachment between her I loved and him I hated was no secret, and it was even imagined by the world that they were engaged. *Her* attachment was very evident, but of

his I was more than sceptical, and remained perfectly unconvinced. Confirmation of my surmises I at length had, but it was many months after the first discovery of their acquaintance.

"A relation of my own had made a low but wealthy marriage. She had been very kind to me when a boy, and, whenever we subsequently met, we were good friends; but as she resided chiefly in the country and amongst her husband's relations, our meetings were rare: however, some time after her husband's death I received a letter from her bespeaking my good offices towards a sister-in-law, who with her daughter was about to visit the metropolis. The father was dead, leaving immense wealth to this his only child; to display this wealth, and perhaps to seek some one to share it with her, was the object of their present journey. I was requested to do all that I could for this pair, and a hint was given me that perhaps the advantage might ultimately prove mutual. For the furtherance of the first part of the desire, I called upon the ladies shortly after their arrival in town. Their appearance and manners were

not particularly favourable; still I requested their commands, though with certain misgivings as to what those might be, which were speedily justified—they desired to *be invited everywhere.*

"It was early in the season, but London was very gay; the parliament was sitting, and numbers of the *élite* of society had nightly parties and balls. It was to these very balls that my protegées were most anxious to go; with a knowledge of the 'locale,' as regarded them, that greatly surprised me. Their appearance was so much against them that I considered the matter nearly hopeless; but, having little interest in the desired quarters, I set two or three engines in motion to obtain the invitations, not anticipating otherwise than a refusal. Much however to my surprise, I heard that my wishes were forestalled, and that invitations had already been sent. I marvelled at the information, and wondered who their secret patron or patroness could be; for though wealth is very powerful, it is not absolutely so, and some very influential person must be behind the scenes.

"The matter was shortly explained: the quiet, retiring *lover* of Leonora and *friend* of Miss Berrington was the decided follower of the heiress, and through his means did she go everywhere. I must confess, though I hated and despised him more than ever for his conduct and taste, yet as I was convinced it must open Miss Berrington's eyes to his indifference to her, I felt new life breathed into my veins.

"Not doubting but that she must be aware of what was passing in London, where the affair was soon openly discussed, I hastened to Berrington Castle, where they still remained. I found Miss Berrington all smiles, and more captivating and enchanting than ever. Hearing shortly afterwards from my relation that Leonora's lover had avowed his wishes and would probably be accepted by the heiress, I grew bold—I proposed and was rejected—rejected for one who, in a few weeks more, was united to another—whilst the being whom I loved, worshipped and adored, became—I have hardly power to say——a maniac!"

Lord Studland paused. It were vain to de-

scribe Mr. Allen's feelings during the recital. Well did he know that it was no delusion of fancy which traced the resemblance between the wretched being whose last agony he had witnessed, and the portrait then before him.

"Was she named Aurelia?" at length inquired Mr. Allen in a subdued voice.

"Yes—why ask you?"

"Alas, my lord, idle as you may have hitherto deemed the curiosity which that picture excited, learn that these ears heard her last parting words —in these arms she drew her almost dying breath!—and beneath yon humble mound of earth she rests! But, oh! my lord, prepare for still a further tale of woe. This packet I received from her dying hands—read it at your leisure—I brought it for you; as, from the first moment I beheld that picture, I felt convinced that you alone could be the Sir Edmund therein named."

The tomb of Aurelia is no longer unmarked. A plain marble slab denotes the spot where she

rests, and the curious eye may decipher thereon the following words.

The government of the heart and mind is from above.
With such support the storms of life rage in vain;
Without it they produce desolation, ruin, and despair!

THE END.

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